



Angie's list®

SUMMER MAINTENANCE GUIDE

== MOVING & REAL ESTATE ==

moving & real estate

Ready to make a move this summer? If you're buying your first home or downsizing from your empty nest, moving can be stressful. Whether you're finding a real estate agent or hiring a moving company, it's important to take time to find qualified service providers to make your transition as seamless as possible.

hiring a mover

Moving all of your possessions from one house to another is a major undertaking with potential pitfalls. Before moving, it pays to do some research ahead of time and [find a reputable company](#) to do the job. Watch out for companies that quote a low price to get the job, and then demand a much larger sum before they'll unload your belongings. [Ask the company](#) to do an on-site estimate before agreeing to hire them and be sure to get the details in a written contract. Homeowners should ask for a binding estimate, which will detail the charges and total cost. Beware of a non-binding estimate, which leaves the final amount due open based on the anticipated cost of the move and could be significantly more upon completion. Experts recommend homeowners pack and transport valuables and items prone to theft, such as jewelry, weapons and prescription medication, themselves.



 [CLICK HERE](#) to find deals from highly rated moving companies on Angie's List.



selling a home

Whether you hire a [real estate agent](#) or decide to [go it alone](#), putting your house up for sale can be a daunting task.

Prepping the house for sale and going through the negotiation process can be time consuming, but successful execution during this stage can also earn you top dollar on your investment.

Experts agree the key to selling a home quickly involves staging the home and removing clutter so it's visually appealing, setting the right price based on comparable properties in your area, and investing in web-based marketing of the home.

buying a home

[Purchasing a house](#) will likely be one of the biggest — if not the biggest — investments you ever make. Have a professional home inspector [examine the house](#) before you make an offer or you could be stuck making expensive repairs after the fact.

Before buying, verify through the builder and your local building authority that the house doesn't have any unpaid liens or open building permits, or you could be on the hook to remedy those if you buy the home.

Finally, be prepared financially. Pull your credit, save for a down payment and talk to a lender before you start house hunting. Getting approved for a loan in advance takes the guesswork out of it, plus you'll know exactly how much house you can afford.

hiring a locksmith

New homeowners should **replace the old locks** with new deadbolt locks, because they don't know who may have previously had a key. Unfortunately, just as there are scams involving moving companies, homeowners should be cautious about which locksmith they hire. Some Angie's List members have reported on locksmiths who use **coercive and intimidating tactics** to strongarm customers in a vulnerable position into paying exorbitant fees for services. Many locksmith companies pay companies to rank them high in search engines so they'll show up as a local company, when in reality they're far away and are using a local freelancer to provide service. Consumers in states that require licensing for locksmiths should verify they are licensed. Beware of companies that show up in unmarked vehicles. Call around and get multiple bids and request a written invoice that lists the cost, before allowing a company to complete work. If you're locked out of your house and the locksmith insists on drilling out the lock, consider that a red flag. Most **reputable locksmiths** have the skills and tools to unlock almost any door.

storage facilities

A storage company is a great option to temporarily house your belongings if you're moving, downsizing or are looking for a place to store items not in use. There are **two primary types of storage offerings** to consider. Self-storage typically involves renting space at an offsite storage facility and paying on a month-to-month schedule. You typically must take your belongings to the facility, or hire a moving company to transport them there for you. The facility's operating hours may be a big consideration when choosing a storage facility. Although many sites don't close, some have specific hours for renters to access their belongings.

Another option is to have a portable storage unit delivered to you, which you can then load or have a mover load on-site. You can choose to leave the unit there or have it transported back to the storage facility for later access. Self-storage offsite is usually more cost-effective than using a portable storage unit, but portable storage units do offer the convenience of accessing your belongings at any time.

