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Reduce Chemical Contaminants in your Home

Our homes can contain many contaminants. Some come from living organisms and are grouped as biological contaminants. Examples are bacteria, viruses, dust mites, animal dander and molds. Other contaminants, which are not associated with living organisms, are classified as chemical contaminants.

Good indoor air quality in the home is achieved when there are very low levels of contaminants. Here are a few tips for avoiding chemical contaminants in your home:

Smoking (Cigarette smoke contains numerous chemical contaminants)

- Do not smoke indoors and do not allow your visitors to smoke in your home

Burning candles (By-products of combustion include carbon monoxide, VOCs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and soot)

- Do not burn candles, liquid fuel or incense in the home

Pesticide use (Pesticides may affect more than just the target pests)

- Use non-chemical pest control methods, such as baits, traps or fly swatters
- Get rid of spiders and clusters of insects by vacuuming
- Seal likely entry points
- Control moisture to discourage moisture loving insects (such as sowbugs and silverfish)
- Avoid pesticides on your lawn or garden
- Do not allow any fungicide or biocide (including natural oils touted to have antimicrobial properties) to be applied in the ducting system of your house

Cleaning and household chemicals

- Select unscented and less toxic cleaning products (e.g. unscented detergent instead of bleach to clean mold, baking soda instead of ammonia-based cleaners to clean countertops)
- Use detergent and water instead of disinfectants
- Eliminate the need for deodorizers by taking the garbage out daily, managing kitchen waste and perishables
- Avoid plug-in or aerosol deodorizers or air fresheners

Personal products

- Use unscented soaps, shampoos, deodorants and lotions
- Discontinue wearing perfume

(Source: www.cmhc.ca)

Thinking of Selling your Home? Find Out What Buyers Look For

Apart from a gorgeous place on a great street, that is. Here's what's getting the attention from potential buyers these days.

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- 1. Energy efficiency features** – With fossil fuel prices headed skyward, buyers now want homes that will save them money on energy bills every day. Think beyond programmable thermostats and Energy Star appliances: buyers are getting excited about unsexy features like heat recovery, ventilators, ground source heat pumps, tankless water heaters, solar panels, and low emissivity, argon-filled windows.
- 2. Luxurious Bathrooms** – Coveted bathroom features include: whirlpool tubs, separate shower enclosures, multiple showerheads, generous linen closets, dressing areas, and double sinks. Buyers also expect multiple bathrooms, and Jack & Jill bathrooms are popular with families.
- 3. Built-in closet organization systems** – Whether your closets are massive or minute, make the most of them with built-in organization systems. Several companies offer many different closet systems, allowing you to customize your closets. For maximum return on investment, plan flexibility into the design. Buyers will want to configure their own storage areas.
- 4. Specialty rooms** – The living room is practically passé, but mention a well-outfitted media room/home theatre and buyers' wallets start to pop open. Exercise rooms are also a trendy feature. And in certain neighbourhoods, a dedicated yoga/meditation space could seal the deal.
- 5. Environmentally friendly finishes and materials** – Hardwood floors are perennially popular, but some buyers prefer eco-friendly alternatives to traditional hardwoods. Bamboo is one of the trendiest new flooring options, because it's considered a renewable and sustainable resource. Cork and natural linoleum are also appealing; heritage hardwood reclaimed from old buildings offers both patina and eco-panache.

Likewise, concerns about both health and the environment are leading lots of buyers to look for homes decorated with natural, environmentally responsible materials and finishes. Paints that are low in VOCs (volatile organic compounds) are a healthier alternative to conventional paints, which release toxic emissions for years. Window coverings made of cotton, hemp, linen, wood or other natural materials are preferable to petrochemical products. Avoid installing anything made of particleboard.

- 6. Wired home** – Each year, there are more techno-gadgets and appliances we just can't live without. Buyers expect a house to have plenty of well-located phone jacks, electrical outlets, and cable/internet connections. We want flexibility and portability, so a house that's wired for maximum connectivity is a hot property.

Other items to consider are luxurious touches around the home, spacious and stylish utility rooms, and high-end finishes for appliances.



Pre-listing Home Inspection:

Arranging for a home inspection prior to listing makes your home more appealing in several ways. A pre-listing inspection suggests you have little to hide, alleviating buyers' concerns and suspicions.

Remembrance Day: Lest we forget

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Canadians are asked to pause and remember the thousands of men and women who sacrificed their lives fighting for freedom and democracy during the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War, the Afghanistan conflict and during peacekeeping missions.

During the First World War (1914-1918), more than 600,000 Canadian soldiers volunteered to go overseas. The troops fought in a series of costly and bloody battles and by the end of the war, more than 66,000 Canadian soldiers had been killed and 172,000 wounded.

They died fighting at Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Broulon Woods, Mons, Passchendaele and Ypres. In Ypres, Canadian soldiers were exposed to German gas attacks, yet continued to fight, showing amazing tenacity and courage in the face of danger.

During the Second World War (1939-45), more than one million men and women from Canada and Newfoundland served in combat in the army, air force and navy. More than 47,000 men and women did not come home from that battle.

Canadians lost their lives fighting in Dieppe, Normandy, the North Atlantic, defending Hong Kong, during the liberation of Italy, and in many other important air, sea and land campaigns.

In Korea, 516 Canadian soldiers died during the 1950-53 conflict, in which 26,791 Canadians served. The battles of Hill 355 and Hill 187, among others, saw Canadians fighting in swamps and rice fields, through torrential rain and snow, in the air and at sea.

In 2003, Canada marked the 50th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice by unveiling the Monument to Canadian fallen at Confederation Park in Ottawa. The words "WE WILL NEVER FORGET YOU BRAVE SONS OF CANADA" are inscribed at the base of the monument, which also contains the names of all 516 Canadians who lost their lives in Korean War service or subsequent Korean peacekeeping service.

In 2004, Canada also remembered the 60th anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, where Canadian troops suffered 18,444 casualties, including 5,021 killed. Of all the divisions that formed part of the 21 Army Group, none suffered more casualties than the 3rd and 2nd Canadian.

It was a huge sacrifice – and a huge factor in turning the tide of war against Hitler's Germany.

The first Remembrance Day, held in 1919 throughout the Commonwealth, was called Armistice Day. The day commemorated the end of the First World War on Monday, November 11, 1918 at 11 a.m. – the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

[Source: www.cbc.ca]



Red Poppies. The poppy of wartime remembrance is *Papaver rhoeas*, the red flowered Corn poppy. Poppies have long been used as a symbol of both sleep and death: sleep because of the opium extracted from them, and death because of their commonly blood-red color.

Nov. 11, the date for Remembrance Day commemorates the end of the First World War on Monday, Nov. 11, 1918 at 11 a.m.
