

10 Critical To-Do's For New Homeowners

Buying a home is one of the most exciting milestones in life. In the midst of all the paperwork and moving boxes, we want to make sure that you don't forget some very important things. Follow this guide to make sure you don't miss these 10 important steps to complete after buying your home.

1. Secure Important Documents

- After closing on your new home, be sure to make three copies of your closing documents. The original documents should be stored in a safe-deposit box at your financial institution and a copy should be stored somewhere accessible in your home (like a fire-proof safe). The third copy can be sent to your home insurance provider to set up coverage. You can always keep a digital copy stored on a secure cloud.

2. Secure Your Home

- Change all of the locks on your new home before you get settled. This includes any manual lock sets on all entry doors, any doors connected to an enclosed garage, storage sheds, greenhouses, or gates. Also, reset the numeric entry codes for any keypads including garage doors or any other entries. If there are no instructions left by the previous owner, look up the keypad manufacturer online for instructions on how to reset units.
- Test fire and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Make sure motion lights and other security lights are working and replace any burned out bulbs.

3. Schedule a Deep Cleaning

- Before moving your personal belongings in your home, it is best to have someone deep clean your space. If you have carpet, a swimming pool, a hot tub, or home gym, you will want these areas professionally sanitized before moving in.

4. Measure the Windows

- While you have clear access, measure your windows and decide what types of window treatments work best in your new space. As you're moving in, you will want privacy while you unpack and arrange your home.

5. Check the Hot Water Heater

- If there are small children in your home, turn the water temperature down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to reduce the risk of unexpected bathwater burns.



6. Check Air Quality

- Replace your air filters when you first move in. An outdated filter doesn't filter air as well and has a negative impact on airflow. This means your air handling system or HVAC unit must work harder — and use more energy — to pump out lower quality air.
- Make sure all the vents in each room are clear of dust and obstructions.

7. Develop a Home Maintenance Checklist

- Locate and inspect the dryer hose and vent to ensure it is not clogged.
- Check the gutters and take note of the next time they may need to be cleaned.

8. Be Prepared for Emergencies

- Assemble an emergency supply kit. Some items to include are flashlights, batteries, non-perishable food, water, blankets, and radio or cellphone with back up batteries.
- Find the circuit box and make sure all circuit breakers are labeled.
- Locate the main water shut-off valve and the gas shut-off valve (if applicable).
- Ensure there is an extinguisher in the kitchen and each level of your home.

9. File for a Homestead Exemption (if you qualify)

- A Homestead Exemption is a legal provision that helps reduce the amount of property taxes owed on owner-occupied homes. There are several kinds of homestead exemptions in Georgia. One is the exemption that lowers all homeowner's property tax bills. Additional exemptions apply based upon the homeowner's age.
- For more information, visit www.FletcherLawFirm.com/Homestead

10. Update Your Estate Planning Documents - Wills and Trusts

- Estate planning can be uncomfortable since it necessitates facing your own mortality. Working with a compassionate, honest, well-informed estate planning attorney can make the task go smoothly and address all of your concerns about your future and the future of your loved ones. If you are looking to protect your accumulated assets while preparing for contingencies, please call us. Our practice focuses on helping protect families today and in the future.

10 Critical To-Do's for New Homeowners

Secure Important Documents

Make three copies of your closing documents.

- One to store somewhere safe in your home.
- One to store in a safe-deposit box at your financial institution.
- One to send to your home insurance provider.

Secure Your Home

- Change all locks.
- Reset numeric entry codes for any keypads.
- Test fire and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Check all motion lights and security lights.

Schedule a Deep Cleaning

Measure the Windows While You Have Clear Access

Take advantage of the clear space and measure your windows for any window treatments

Check the Hot Water Heater

If you have small children, turn the water temperature down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Check Air Quality

- Replace all air filters.
- Clear all vents of dust and obstructions.

Develop a Home Maintenance Checklist

- Make sure dryer hose and vent are not clogged.
- Check gutters and take note of next time they need to be cleaned.

Be Prepared for Emergencies

- Assemble an emergency supply kit.
- Locate circuit box and make sure all circuit breakers are labeled.
- Locate main water shut-off valve and gas shut-off valve if applicable.
- Place a fire extinguisher in kitchen and each level of your home.

File for a Homestead Exemption (if you qualify)

- Visit www.FletcherLawFirm.com/Homestead for more information.

Update Your Estate Planning Documents

- Wills
- Powers of attorney
- Trusts
- Advanced healthcare directives