



Kamps Realty

Guide to Home Ownership



**FIRST PLACE
REALTY**

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By Eddie Kamps

Introduction

Buying your first home or moving to a new home requires many changes and many people feel a bit overwhelmed after the excitement of closing day is over. Home ownership is more complex and carries more responsibilities than renting. The root cause of anxiety is uncertainty and

Social

Write an Introductory Letter to Your Neighbours

It is likely that you will not know the vast majority or any of your new neighbours when you move in to your new home, so writing a letter to the residents on your block and in the immediate area is a great way to introduce yourselves to the neighbourhood. A short, humorous letter about your family, work, and hobbies without revealing any intensely personal information will suffice.

Check Out the Community Organizations

Reach out to organizations in your community and see what they have to offer. Most communities have a Community Association (CA) which is more of a political organization that represents the community's interests to the city councilor. Residents Associations (RA) are more social and organize community activities and manage amenities. In lake communities, it is the RA that is responsible for running the lake and facilities. There are also private social, sports, and charitable organizations in the neighbourhood that afford you opportunities to become part of the community and meet new people.

Social Media

In a world where a third of YouTube is cat videos and every niche interest has a following, every neighbourhood should have a Facebook group that you should join to feel a part of the community. In my community's group, there is news about community events, classified about local businesses, news that affects the neighbourhood, requests for help, and some good ol' banter. Make sure you join so you don't miss out on the fun!

Impromptu Meetings

Some of the best ways to meet new people is to just get out there at community landmarks and gathering places. A neighbourhood pub is the best place to meet other adults. For young families and parents who may feel a bit alone, local playgrounds are an underrated venue to meet other parents and develop relationships within your demographic.

Maintenance

Every property needs a maintenance plan to address any repairs or renovations that it will require. Much of the anxiety of homeowners comes from the uncertainty of costs arising from unplanned maintenance and damages. While keeping a sharp eye on your house will go a long way in avoiding any expensive repairs, a basic plan or understanding of future costs is required to effectively manage your home.

A great resource is the home inspection that was performed when the property was purchased. It itemizes all of the deficiencies that could or should be repaired. I would encourage you to make a list of the repairs or upgrades that will be required along with the date that they will be required and estimated costs. Once complete, you can determine how much you will have to save each month to save for it.

For example, the roof is old and will need to be replaced in 4 years. You receive quotes and the cost was determined to be \$9600. The amount that needs to be saved each month is determined by:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Monthly Amount} &= \frac{\text{Cost of Renovation}}{(\text{Years until upgraded} \times 12)} \\ &= \frac{\$9600}{(4 \text{ years} \times 12 \text{ months/year})} \\ &= \$200/\text{month} \end{aligned}$$

To replace the roof at a cost of \$9600, set up a monthly savings plan of \$200/month for 4 years to adequately save for the expense.

Create a Yearly Home Ownership Plan

Your house is a system that requires a basic annual maintenance plan to ensure that the necessary work is done to preserve the functionality of its vital systems. This need to be too specific or detailed. For example, a furnace should be serviced by a qualified professional at least once per year, with the ideal time being in the fall just before the cold months. Lawns need to be fertilized in the spring and fall, with specific types for each application. See the Kamps Realty Annual Home Maintenance Plan and adjust as you see fit.

Trades Contact List

Have a list of trades you would call if you need work done. In an emergency, less talk and more action are preferable. Having a list consisting of a plumber, an electrician, an HVAC (heating, venting, and air conditioning) professional will get qualified people on site sooner to minimize damage, cost, and inconvenience.

Emergency Preparedness

Alberta has seen several significant natural disasters in the last few years, including the 2013 floods, the fires in Fort McMurray, and the recent hailstorms. Although evacuations are relatively rare, prudence and common sense demand that one be prepared to leave their home on short notice and be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours.

Emergency Numbers on Fridge

In case of emergency, you do not want to fumbling on your phone trying to google the best agency for help. Print off the list of emergency numbers in the appendix of this publication and put them on your fridge. Feel free to make your own list as well.

Home Emergency Plan

You need a home emergency plan so everyone knows what to do and how to get a hold of each other in the event of a disaster. Your plan should include, but is not limited to:

- A list of contact numbers for your family members, emergency contacts, and your family physician
- List of Alberta Health Card numbers

- Photocopies of important documents, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, passports etc

Google “City of Calgary Emergency Action Plan” for a fillable form and a detailed list of items.

Home Emergency Kit

A home emergency kit with enough provisions to last 72 hours is a necessity. In the event of a mass evacuation, you need to be self-sufficient as emergency services responds to critical situations and tries to limit the damage and severity of the disaster. To reduce the chances of you being a burden on the system during its most stressed times, prepare an emergency kit using the resources in the appendix. Make sure you check it once a year to make sure the clothes still fit, the food is still good, and the documents are still accurate.

Financial

Automatic Payments

Have your utility bills on automatic payments so no payments are missed. Some service providers will permit the use of credit cards while others only accept direct withdrawals from a bank account.

Spare Credit Card

Have a spare credit card to easily transition your automatic bill payments in case of a lost wallet or purse or fraud. It could take several weeks to re-arrange your finances and get new credit cards. During this period, life goes on and bills still need to be paid. To ensure timely payment, have a no annual fee credit card kept at home at all times so it can't be lost and be used in case of emergency theft, or fraud of your other cards.

Create an Emergency Fund for Repairs

An emergency fund is necessary to help pay for any unexpected or extraordinary repairs that could be necessary. The total amount is dependent upon the age of your house, its condition and when key systems were last updated, the cost of any repairs, insurance coverage and deductibles, and your personal financial situation. A good rule of thumb is \$2000-\$3000 at a minimum.

Organization

This is the least exciting section of the publication but not the least important. Having a simple plan to organize all of the documents, receipts, and correspondence will save you a lot of stress and frustration later.

The overall philosophy that I will impart is that every piece of information, either electronic or paper, must have a place. For each property, buy some 14” manila file folders and label them with the property address for each folder below (for example “123 Maple Street – Purchase”). Put all relevant documents in each folder according to the system below:

- Purchase – contains all documents relating to the purchase (and eventual sale) of the property, including the purchase agreement, mortgage documents, Real Property Report etc
- Receipts – put all receipts in this folder as you receive them so they are in one place when you do your bookkeeping
- Property Information – insurance documentation, spare keys

Have a similar filing system with the same folders on your computer, properly backed up or in the cloud.

Condo documents should be placed in a folder or a binder and sorted by document type. The condo board and property manager will produce AGM and meeting minutes, annual budgets, reports, insurance binders, and other correspondence that should be properly filed.

This is an excellent tool to communicate your real estate assets to mortgage brokers or your bank and will save you lots of time when obtaining financing. Ensure you put the date the last time the figures were updated.

Important Phone Numbers

Emergency Services

Ambulance, Fire, and Police.




 24 Hours

Health Link

Free nurse advice and general health information for Albertans.



 [Health Link Website](#)

 24 Hours

Addiction Services Helpline

Help for problems with gambling, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

 1-866-332-2322

 24 Hours

AlbertaQuits Helpline

Tobacco cessation counsellors can help you make a plan to quit, manage cravings, and stay on track.

 www.albertaquits.ca

 1-866-710-7848

 8am-8pm

Bullying Helpline

Advice or support on bullying.


 www.bullyfreealberta.ca

 1-888-456-2323

 24 Hours

Child Abuse Hotline


Call if you think a child is being abused or neglected by a parent or guardian.

 1-800-387-5437

 24 Hours

Dementia Advice

Advice and support for people who have problems with thinking, reasoning, or remembering (e.g., dementia) or the people who care for them.

 811

 24 hours

Family Violence Info Line

Call if you (or someone you know) are going through family violence or abuse if you have questions or want to find out about programs, resources, and services.

 310-1818

 24 Hours

Income Support Contact Centre


Financial help for Albertans who don't have resources to meet their basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter).


 1-866-644-5135

 24 Hours

Kids Help Phone

Free, anonymous, confidential telephone and web counselling for youth in Canada.

 www.kidshelpphone.ca


 1-800-668-6868

 24 Hours

Medication & Herbal Preparation Advice Line

Advice and information about medicines and herbal products from pharmacists and nurses.

 1-800-332-1414

 5pm-9am

Mental Health Helpline

Offers help for mental health concerns for Albertans.

 1-877-303-2642

 24 Hours

Poison & Drug Information Service

Confidential advice about poisons, chemicals, medicines, and herbal products.

 1-800-332-1414

 24 Hours




Do You Have A 72-Hour Emergency Kit?

Use this checklist to stock a basic 72-hour kit and add items depending on your family's needs. Ideally, your kit should be stored in a waterproof and wheeled container. You may have to stay in your home without electricity or water, or you may have to evacuate your home for a period of time.

Food and water

- Four litres of water per person per day (for drinking).
- Food that doesn't require cooking and won't spoil, such as granola and protein bars, trail mix, dried fruit and canned tuna (remember to replace food and water once a year).

Equipment

- Manual can opener.
- Flashlight (wind-up or battery-operated) and batteries (replace batteries every year).
- Wind-up or battery-powered radio (replace batteries every year).
- Candles, lighter, waterproof/strike-anywhere matches.
- Pens and paper.
- Duct tape.
- Pocket knife.
- Cooking and eating utensils.
- Warm clothes and blankets or sleeping bags.
- Garbage bags.
- Whistle and flares (to attract attention).

Toiletries

- Cleaning supplies (hand sanitizer, dry shampoo, etc.).
- First aid kit.
- Toilet paper.
- Dish soap.
- Feminine supplies.

Special needs items

- Infant needs (diapers, formula, bottles, etc.).
- Prescription medicines.
- Extra pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses.
- Pet items (food, leash, muzzle, medication, etc.).

Personal documents and items

- A list of your emergency contacts (names and contact numbers).
- An extra set of house and car keys.
- Some cash in smaller bills.
- Copies of important documents like passports, birth certificates and insurance policies.

2017-1-248

Calgary Emergency Management Agency

Get an emergency kit!

Assemble one...

Basic emergency kit checklist:

- Water** — two litres of water per person per day (include small bottles)
- Food** that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods (replace once a year)
- Manual can opener**
- Wind-up or battery-powered flashlight** (and extra batteries)
- Wind-up or battery-powered radio** (and extra batteries)
- First aid kit**
- Extra keys** for your car and house
- Cash, travellers' cheques** and change
- Important family documents** such as identification, insurance and bank records
- Emergency plan** — include a copy in your kit as well as contact information

Consider these additional emergency kit supplies:

- Two additional litres of water per person per day for cooking and cleaning
- Candles and matches or lighter (place in sturdy containers and do not burn unattended)
- Change of clothing and footwear for each household member
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each household member
- Toiletries and personal hygiene items
- Hand sanitizer, toilet paper and garbage bags
- Prepaid phone card, mobile phone charger
- Pet food and supplies
- Infant formula, baby food and supplies
- Activities for children like books, puzzles or toys
- Prescription medications, medical equipment
- Utensils, plates and cups
- Household chlorine bleach or water purifying tablets
- Basic tools (hammer, pliers, wrench, screwdrivers, work gloves, pocket knife)
- Small fuel-operated stove and fuel
- Whistle (to attract attention)
- Duct tape

i ...or buy one

You can buy an emergency kit online and in stores across Canada. Canadian Red Cross kits can be purchased [on its website](#). The Salvation Army also has a [standard kit](#) as well as a [car kit](#) available for purchase on its website.

Government of Canada

The screenshot shows the Canadian Red Cross eShop website. The header includes the Canadian Red Cross logo, the text 'eShop', and navigation links for 'Home', 'Shop by Department', and 'Contact Us'. There are also links for 'CREATE AN ACCOUNT', 'LOGIN', and a shopping cart icon. A search bar is present with the text 'Search' and 'Training Partner Materials'.

The main content area is titled 'EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KITS'. Below this title is a search bar with the text 'Search by keyword or product #'. On the left side, there is a 'CATEGORIES' sidebar with the following items: Personal Protective Equipment, NEW PRODUCTS, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, FIRST AID KITS, FIRST AID EQUIPMENT, FIRST AID SUPPLIES, PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, AED, FIRST AID TRAINING PRODUCTS, AQUATICS, CLEARANCE, and FREE DIGITAL RESOURCES.

The main product display area shows four emergency preparedness kits:

- DELUXE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT**: A large kit with various supplies including a backpack, water bottles, and food.
- BASIC EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT**: A smaller kit with a red backpack and essential supplies.
- WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KITS**: A kit designed for use in a workplace setting.
- CLASSROOM EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KITS**: A kit designed for use in a classroom setting.