

## Summer Checklist

The Federation of Master Builders checklist of jobs to do around your home this summer

Summer is the time to get out in the garden and make the most of the good weather. So take some time to make sure your home and garden are ready for BBQs, paddling pools and relaxing. Before you head out into the sunshine check that the thermostat is on low or switch the heating off altogether.

Do a security audit; do all the windows and doors have locks fitted? Are all the locks working and do you have all the keys? Are security lights working? Do gates and garages lock? Do you have a burglar alarm? If not consider whether it would be a worthwhile investment to get one. Brian Berry, Director of External Affairs at the Federation of Master Builders (FMB), the largest trade association in the UK construction industry, says "Most of us go away at some point in the summer so it's important to check that your home will be secure while you are away. Often there are so many other things to think about shortly before you leave that checking whether your home would be easy for a thief to get into is the last thing on your mind, which is why it's a good idea to do it early in the summer – then you know you're safe."

While checking all the locks on the windows and doors you may have noticed that some of the paint work looks past its best. "Now is a good time to do painting jobs as the weather is usually drier." says Brian "as well as wood work on windowsills and door frames you should also have a look at the exterior paint work – if your home is painted. Repainting the exterior may be a job for a builder as it might require scaffolding and it's important to get a good finish."

If you haven't already had a chance in the spring to treat fences and sheds with wood preservatives do it now so that the garden is looking tip top.

Finally before all the BBQs and garden parties start it's a good idea to dig out the garden furniture and BBQ to give them a good clean and make sure they are ready for action.

Then sit back on your newly cleaned garden chair and enjoy the summer.

If you need to call in a builder follow the FMB's simple guidelines for finding a builder:

1. Be specific and prepare a detailed brief. Be as clear as you can about what you want, as this can make a huge difference to quotes.
2. Ask friends, family and neighbours for recommendations of builders they have used recently. Alternatively check the FMB's find a builder website ([www.fmb.org.uk/findabuilder](http://www.fmb.org.uk/findabuilder)). And don't be afraid to ask for references or to speak to previous clients.
3. Get at least three quotes. When you are ready to decide, don't just go with the cheapest, consider communication and quality too.
4. Use a contract. You can download free contracts on the FMB website (<http://www.findabuilder.co.uk/why/contractsNew/>).
5. Never pay the full cost of the project up front. Agree a payment plan. Using a credit card to pay can offer you more protection.