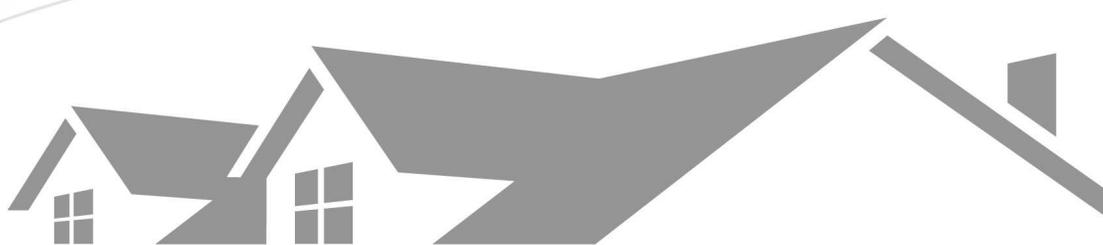


## FEATURES

TIPS FOR LANDLORDS

TAKE 5: HOME MAINTENANCE TOOLS

PET EVACUATION PLANS



# Home**talk**



## take**5**

### Must-have tools for homeowners

When you own your home, things are going to break and, unless you want to spend your money on visits from a neighborhood handyman, you're going to need to fix them yourself. Luckily, you don't need an arsenal of tools to handle most home maintenance fixes. These five tools will cover most of your basic projects.

- 1. Cordless drill:** A cordless drill is a must-have for installing cabinets, drawer pulls, hinges, picture frames, shelves and hooks, and more. Whether it's for do-it-yourself projects or repairs, you'll use your cordless drill just about every month.
- 2. Drain cleaners:** Shower and bathroom sink drains are susceptible to clogs because of the daily buildup of hair and whisker clippings. You can use chemical clog removers like Drano, but they're expensive and the lingering chemical scent is unpleasant. Instead, buy some plastic drain cleaners that can reach into the drain to pull out the clog of hair and gunk. You can purchase them on Amazon or at a local hardware store for a low price.
- 3. Shop-vac:** No matter how careful you are, spills and accidents will happen and there are some tasks that just can't be handled with paper towels or a standard vacuum, like pet messes or broken glass.

**4. Loppers:** Even the minimum amount of care for your landscaping will require some loppers to remove damaged branches, vines, thick weeds, and any other unruly plants in your yard.

**5. Flashlight:** You're going to want something a little more powerful than your iPhone flashlight when you're in the crawlspace!

## BE A BETTER LANDLORD

Best practices for renting your property and keeping tenants

Rental properties are one of the best ways to earn passive income and build wealth, but "passive" is a little misleading—it can still be a substantial amount of work. However, with a little planning and dedication, you can run your properties efficiently while also keeping your tenants happy.

### Treat it like a business

Successful businesses have plans and procedures that keep things running smoothly, and the same should be true for renting and managing your properties.

That means committing to customer service, outsourcing work appropriately, and paying close attention to income and expenses. Don't just assume that you'll collect a check each month and everything else will be a breeze.



### Thoroughly vet your tenants

Collecting applications, interviewing tenants, and checking references means a lot of legwork up front, but it's worth it in the long run. Choosing the right tenant could mean going years without incident—no late payments, no legal issues, and no property damage. Choosing the wrong tenant could mean monthly calls and visits to collect late rent,

expensive property damage and repairs, eviction processes, court dates, and a whole lot of stress.

### Make sure your lease is rock solid

Lease agreement laws vary from state to state, so don't cut corners—find a lawyer who specializes in lease agreements. You'll be glad you were thorough if you ever have legal issues with a tenant.



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# Hello.

I've put together  
interesting and helpful  
real estate information  
just for you!

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## recent listings



Lusby, MD  
\$1550.00  
Great split foyer in CRE. No neighbor to the one side. Large backyard and shed



Dowell, MD  
\$ 2000.00  
Beautiful waterfront condo. Can be leased furnished(\$2300) or unfurnished(\$2000)



California, MD  
\$ 779,000.00  
Great price for this 6 lots, 2 homes, waterfront listing. Pier and boat lift

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Great Mills, MD  
\$1500.00  
Huge fenced in back yard and deck in cul de sac split foyer

### Pet evacuation plans

Many homeowners create evacuation plans for their homes and practice them with their kids, but far fewer have considered one for their pets. Take these steps to add your pets to your evacuation plan.

**Assign an adult.** Everyone should know how to act during an evacuation, and that includes assigning one parent or adult to the pets. This allows the other parent and the children to focus on their part of the evacuation plan, so there's no confusion during a high-stress moment when time is of the essence.

**Keep everything accessible.** If you need to evacuate, you should know exactly where every important item is. If your pets require carriers, keep them in a place that you can access easily.

**Practice.** Include your pets in your home evacuation drills. It'll help you see how they will respond and make changes to your plan if necessary. Getting your dog out of a window may not be as simple as you think!

**Be prepared in case of separation.** A microchip or a GPS-compatible tag can help you find your pets once it's safe to return to the area.

## Work with Me!

As a St. Mary's County native, born and raised in the Hollywood / Leonardtown area, and a former self employed business owner that tripled the business sales, I have the drive to excel in helping you with your real estate needs. I am very involved in my community. I am Past President of the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department and have held the offices of Treasurer and Vice President. I stay locally involved to keep my home town a town that all want to live in. I was presented Citizen of the Year for Knights of Columbus Council 7914 in 2013 and just recently nominated for the Philanthropy Hall of Fame Inductee for the Community Foundation of Southern Maryland for 2017. I have been an agent with O'Brien since 2007 and as of July 2016, I am now the Property Manager for the company.