



Play it safe with your smoke alarms

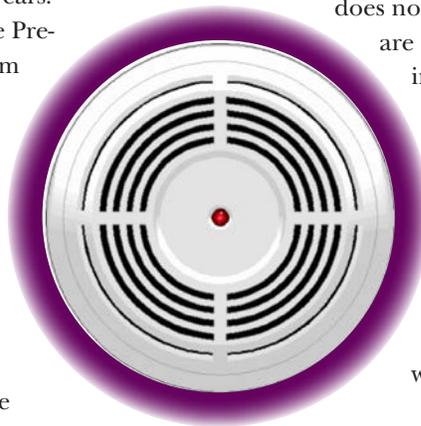
► Smoke alarms may be one of those items that homeowners “set and forget.” But if you haven’t thought about your smoke alarms in many years, it’s high time to take a fresh look.

Most smoke alarms are only tested to last 10 years. What’s more, the Massachusetts Board of Fire Prevention Regulations adopted new smoke alarm guidelines effective December 1, 2016, which apply to homes constructed before 1975 that have battery-powered smoke alarms. (Homes constructed after 1975 must follow the regulations of the State Building Code [780 CMR].)

Updated technology

Some of the regulation changes reflect advances in smoke alarm technology over the

years. Alarms must be photoelectric, a technology better at detecting smoldering fires, which are more likely to be fatal. This can be in combination with ionization, which works better at detecting flaming fires. An alarm that uses ionization alone does not meet the standard; ionization smoke alarms are more prone to “nuisance” alarms from cooking or steam.



Battery-powered smoke alarms are now required to have a 10-year battery sealed inside them, so no more wondering when you last replaced a battery. Alarms must be equipped with a “hush” feature to silence nuisance alarms. There are smoke and carbon monoxide alarm combinations available which meet these requirements.

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Doors > More than meets the eye



Many people view doors as nothing more than a slab of wood with some metal hinges. However, the type of door you have can greatly impact things like home security, frequency of repair, and heating and air conditioning costs. It’s worth taking a look beneath the surface.

By Daniel Carr

► What types of doors are there?

There are three options for wood doors: hollow core, solid core, and solid wood. A hollow-core door has an interior made of cardboard laid out in a honeycomb pattern. This core is surrounded by a wood veneer, which is essentially a shell or a “skin.” These doors are not very good at blocking out noise, and they are highly susceptible to damage. However, they are

inexpensive and, because they are light and easy to carry, the easiest to install.

The solid-core door has an interior made of sturdy material. There are many types of cores, but the three most common are:

- **Particle cores** made from a coarse sawdust that is more dense on the outside than on the inside
- **Staved lumber cores** made from small blocks of wood glued together

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Featured products

New door and window options

Harvey Majesty windows have been a popular choice from the Co-op at BBR for many years. Now, *gliding windows as well as doors* (gliding and outswing) are available from the Majesty line. They are made of wood with a aluminum-clad exterior and clear pine interior.

Another new option is *Kolbe's Forgent line of windows*, made of a proprietary fiberglass/polymer

combination material known as *Glastra*. Double-hung, casement, sliding, and awning windows are all available, with a choice of either *Glastra* or wood interiors. Multi-chambered extrusions in an advanced ladder design add strength and resiliency and promote energy efficiency.

KOLBE
WINDOWS & DOORS

Reuse Center renovation plans move forward



Plans have been coming together for a major renovation of the Reuse Center building, with construction expected to begin later this year. Changes will include a reconfigured interior space, larger receiving area for processing donated materials more efficiently, better displays, a new checkout area, a new HVAC system, and energy efficiency improvements.

Stay tuned for more information about the project and how you can participate.

Flex-Tec wood repair epoxy

Why replace your older wood when you can repair it? Flex-Tec wood repair epoxy is engineered to remain flexible and resilient to provide a long-lasting and cost effective repair to door jambs, column bases, and any damaged wood components. Flex-Tec's compression strength is rated at 14,000 psi, which exceeds that of hardwoods such as maple and walnut. After the repair cures, the epoxy can be sanded, chiseled, planed, and otherwise tooled just like wood, and it will also grip screws just like wood. This makes it perfect for resetting locksets, hinges, and other drill-and-refill applications. **Member price for dual-cartridge starter kit: \$166.50**

Kitchen scrap bucket

Corral your carrot tops, cucumber peels, and cantaloupe rinds in this scrap bucket before taking them out to your home compost bin. Perforated top keeps odors to a minimum while keeping out fruit flies. **Price for everyone: \$10.00**



Member prices are listed and are subject to change without notice.

Boston magazine and Boston Home magazine partner with Boston Building Resources

The nonprofit Reuse Center at Boston Building Resources has been selected by *Boston Magazine* as the charitable beneficiary of the Best of Boston Home event, to be held in the late fall. The partnership will not only raise funds to support the Reuse Center, but will also raise awareness among construction and renovation professionals as well as homeowners about donating reusable materials rather than discarding them.

Boston Building Resources was selected as a charitable partner because the mission of the Reuse Center—providing lower-income people with low-cost materials for home repair and maintenance—dovetails with the event's focus on home improvement.

The Best of Boston Home event typically attracts 300 people from architecture and construction firms and other businesses focused on home building and remodeling. It honors Greater Boston's top design and building firms and will be held at the Boston Design Center. In addition to a presence at the event, Boston Building Resources will receive pro bono advertisements in *Boston Home* and *Boston* magazine.



The Reuse Center at Boston Building Resources is a member of EarthShare, a federation of environmental and conservation charities. To find out more about how you and your workplace can support us through an EarthShare New England charitable giving campaign,

please email info@earthsharenewengland.org. You can also visit EarthShare New England's website at www.earthsharenewengland.org.

Doors *continued from page 1*

- **Structural composite lumber cores** (SCLC) made of flakes of wood randomly oriented and pressed together to add strength

More and more companies are making SCLC doors, because, according to BBR Window and Door Specialist Greg Caplan, they are less susceptible to warping, don't use any added urea formaldehyde, and are cheaper to make. Like the hollow cores, solid cores are surrounded with a wooden veneer. They are soundproof and sturdy, best used as interior doors, Greg says.

The solid wood door is an assembly of multiple pieces of solid wood. Vertical boards called stiles run along the full height of the door along each side. At the bottom and top, horizontal boards called rails run along the width between the stiles. Some doors may have a third rail in the middle as well. Doors may also have mullions (boards that run vertically between two rails) and muntins (also vertical, complementing mullions). Panels fill in the rest, completing the door. Although they are more expensive, solid wood doors are durable and the most aesthetically pleasing. For this reason, they are commonly used as exterior doors.

Another option for an exterior door is fiberglass, which has key advantages over wood—the first being durability. Greg points out that fiberglass won't rot, warp, twist, or catch on fire, so it could last for decades or even centuries. A fiberglass door is also more energy efficient, holding in heat more effectively than wood. Because of the strong, thin fiberglass skin, most of the door's thickness consists of foam insulation. However, some people find wood doors more aesthetically pleasing.

One recent innovation is doors made from torrefied wood—wood that has been heated between 400 and 600 degrees Fahrenheit. (Because it is heated in an oxygen-free environment, the wood

doesn't burn.) Superheating the wood removes all sugars, drastically reducing the risk of rotting, warping, or catching on fire. Torrefied wood doors make great exterior doors, and because of their resistance to the elements, they have a 20-year warranty without an overhang requirement. This is far greater than that of a regular wood door, which has a warranty of one to five years depending on the thickness of the veneer and also requires that it be under an overhang. All that durability comes with a price: Greg reports that torrefied wood doors can cost 50% to 100% more than regular wood doors, and there is a limited selection of them. Most customers choose fiberglass doors, which are far cheaper than torrefied wood. However, says Greg, "Some people just prefer wood."

➤ **Slab vs. pre-hung**

A slab door is the door only, without hinges, knobs, or frame. Slab doors are often installed as interior doors. They are cheaper, which makes them more manageable to buy in bulk. Interior doors don't need to close with a tight seal, so contact with the frame is not as crucial. Greg recommends a slab door if you have a historic home with a strong frame already in place.

Pre-hung doors are already hung in their frames and include hinges and knobs. Because pre-hung doors are perfectly fit in the jambs, they are best used by do-it-yourselfers and basic carpenters. Also, should you have a damaged door frame, a pre-hung door is the best choice.

➤ **Size and swing**

To determine the size door you need, measure horizontally across the width of the door slab and vertically from the floor/sill to the top of the door. Most doors are called by their *nominal size*—the size of the slab, e.g., 32" x 80". Typically, the rough opening for a pre-hung door is 2.5" wider and 2.5" taller than the nominal size. A door that is *full and square* will measure exactly the nominal size, while one that is *pre-fit and beveled* will be slightly smaller because it has been adjusted to fit into the jamb.

For a pre-hung door, consider which way you want the door to swing. If you need an exterior door, Greg recommends considering the benefits of an outswing door. "When the wind blows on a door that swings outward, it helps to seal the door," he said. Also, if security is a concern, it is far more difficult to break in a door that swings outward than it is to force an inswing door.

➤ **Multi-point locks**

Most locks for doors are deadbolts: a metal bolt slides into the jamb, preventing the door from being opened. While these are fairly secure, a multi-point lock takes security to the next level. The deadbolt is usually dependent on the



strength of the wooden jamb that it slides into, which isn't nearly as strong as the bolt itself. A multi-point lock includes one that works like a deadbolt, one that runs through the jamb near the top

of the frame, and one that rides through the jamb near the bottom of the frame. This makes the door more secure. Endura sells a multi-point lock as a feature of its astragal—the strip that fills the gap between two doors. The secure astragal is paired with a sill (which fills the gap at the bottom of the door) to create an energy-efficient, secure door.

➤ **Taking care of the doors you have**

Applying a complete coat of paint to an exterior door will protect it from the elements. Properly coating the edges is sometimes overlooked, but very important. Natural wood doors can be refinished with spar varnish, a marine product that will stand up to the elements. To prevent drafts, apply weather stripping to the top and sides and a door sweep at the bottom. ◀

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual meeting

Monday, April 23

5:00–8:00 p.m.

at Boston Building Resources

100 Terrace Street

Boston, MA 02120



Some builders think big when it comes to reusing building materials. Others think small. Join us at BBR for a tour of a tiny house constructed in the back of a 16-foot box truck using all reclaimed materials. The creators behind this project, filmmaker Alex Eaves and tiny house expert Derek Diedricksen, will be on hand to explain how they did it and to answer questions.

RSVP: bbr-annual.eventbrite.com
deb@bostonbuildingresources.com
or by phone, 617-442-2262, ext. 235

BBR Staff on the Move

After more than a decade at BBR, **Kim Eifrid** retired in December, passing the kitchen design torch to **Patrick Shaughnessy**. Patrick has been designing kitchens since 2007. His experience as a professional chef gives him unique insights in his approach to design, which focuses on functionality and style.

Manny Louis, who is working steadily toward a degree at Boston Architectural College, has accepted a job at an architectural firm. Stepping in to his place behind the Co-op sales counter is **Abel Perez**, who has been doing sales at the Reuse Center for the past two years.

Play it safe with your smoke alarms

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If you have working battery-powered smoke alarms that were installed before December 2016, they can still be used until they are 10 years old or have exceeded the manufacturer's recommended life. After that, they must be replaced by new units that meet the updated regulations.

Smoke alarm placement

One- and two-family homes built before 1975 (and which have not been significantly altered) must have alarms placed in the following locations:

- On every habitable level of the home
- In the basement
- On the ceiling at the base of each stairway leading to a floor above, including the basement stairway (but not within stairways)
- On the ceiling outside each sleeping area
- In two-family homes, in all common areas shared by residents
- Highly recommended, but not required, on the ceiling in each bedroom

Alarms may be battery-powered, hardwired, or a combination of both.

- Replacement battery-powered alarms must be the type with a sealed, non-rechargeable, non-replaceable 10-year battery.
- Alarms in non-required locations can have replaceable batteries.
- If wireless or networked, alarms can have a replaceable battery as long as the battery lasts for at least one year.

New and replacement combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms must also meet new requirements:

- They must have both a tone and a voice alarm to identify the type of emergency.
- Battery-powered combination alarms must have a 10-year, sealed, non-replaceable battery to meet the power requirements for the service life of the unit. ◀



John Rowse, 1943–2018

Courtesy of Boston Herald



John Rowse, the founder of Boston Building Resources, died on March 29. He was 74.

A genuine visionary, John founded the Boston Building Materials Co-op in 1978 and co-founded the nonprofit Reuse Center in 1993. He went on to start a third organization, Community Boat Building, in the last decade of his life.

John was trained as an architect and had a passion for sharing his knowledge with other homeowners, especially those with fewer financial resources, so that they could take good care of their homes. In a 1990 *Boston Herald* article about the Co-op, he stated that “the ultimate goal is not profit, but helping people solve their housing problems.” John’s contributions to the organization were extensive, from designing the Co-op building to drawing the original “three houses” logo.

A celebration of John’s life will be held on Saturday, June 2, his 75th birthday. Further information will be posted on our website as it becomes available.



Thank you!

2017

A round of applause to our 2017 materials donors

We are grateful to the 1,601 people and organizations that donated materials to the Reuse Center at BBR during 2017. From windows and doors to bathtubs, pavers, and hardware, you helped keep materials valued at more than \$2 million out of the landfill and made it possible for them to be used by low- and moderate-income homeowners seeking to repair, maintain, and improve their homes.

We only have space to list the companies and organizations below, but we extend our thanks to every one of our donors!

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The Makers Guild
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We are grateful to all of our donors of materials and regret any error or omission from this list.

2017 Materials Donors

Outstanding Donors

Companies and organizations donating materials with a fair market value of more than \$10,000

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Connelly Hardware Company
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Johnson Lumber

'Why would you throw that away?'



When Frankie Lieberman closed her home improvement business, she donated a large quantity of material to the Reuse Center. Frankie has been a regular donor of materials over the years. "Most of it was just run-of-the-mill stuff," she says—but every little bit helps our low- and moderate-income customers to finish their projects while keeping reusable materials out of the landfill.

Visit the "Stories" page of our website to see a video about Frankie.



www.bostonbuildingresources.com

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Hands On is published by **Boston Building Resources**. We inspire, educate, and empower homeowners to increase the efficiency and value of their homes, focusing on affordable solutions that help all of our neighbors.

This newsletter is a project of the Boston Building Materials Co-op Charitable and Educational Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Spring projects

Give your home a facial

Check the exterior of your home for any paint deterioration, mold, mildew, or cracks in the siding and trim. Caulk cracks, scrape peeling paint, spot-prime, and repaint affected patches.

Your trim might need a trim

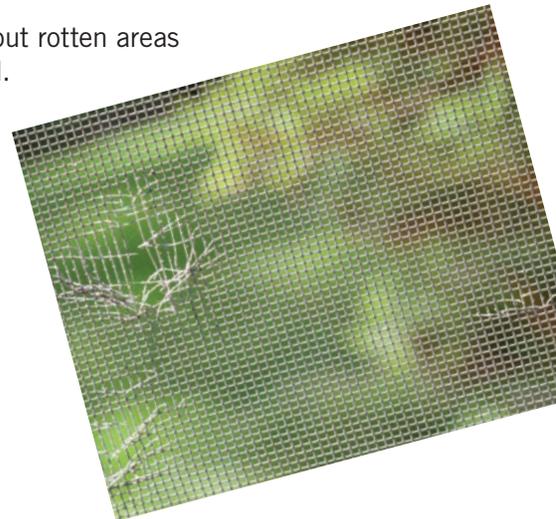
Inspect your siding and trim for rot. Dig out rotten areas and use Flex-Tec wood repair epoxy to fill.

Windows and screens

Replace broken or cracked windowpanes and torn screens at BBR's window and screen repair clinic, or drop off the sash that needs repair and we'll do it for you.

Vent care of all kinds

Clean out your dryer exhaust vent, and schedule a chimney cleaning.



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