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## A Homeowner's Checklist for Deck Safety Month

by homewarranty.com

Spring is here, which means summer is not far behind. For many families, hanging out on a backyard deck is a great way to savor warm summer nights, spend time with friends, or gather around the BBQ for an outdoor meal. Take some time this month to ensure everyone's safety by checking out our Deck Safety Tips.

### Wood Decay

Check several areas, including the ledger board (where the deck attaches to the house), support posts, and joists to look for split or decaying wood. Use a screwdriver to penetrate the wood surface. If you can easily penetrate 1/4" to 1/2" or the wood is soft and spongy, decay may be present.

### The Railings

Deck railings should be secure and not "wiggle." Railings must be properly attached to both the deck framing and deck surface.

### Check the Footings

Check footings and support posts for loose connections, inferior fasteners (for example, nails instead of bolts), pooling water, and signs of decay.

### The Flashing

Check the flashing for leaks or cracks. If water gets under the flashing, the wood can rot and weaken the deck's foundation.

### Pest Infestation

Walk the surface and check for pest infestation. Do you see small boreholes? These may indicate insect infestation. Other signs include the presence of a powder resembling fine sawdust, wood shavings, or merely seeing termites in swarms around your home.

### Water Damage

Ensure water from your sprinklers, downspouts, or hoses doesn't discharge near support posts. Exposure to water over time can cause wood rot to occur.

### Pathways

Keep all pathways clear to prevent tripping. This includes potted plants, toys, and other outdoor equipment.

### Lifespan

As a general rule, a standard deck's lifespan is around 15 to 20 years. Keep your deck healthy, and it will repay you with happy and safe summer gatherings.

### Consider a Professional Inspection

Your deck is constantly exposed to rain, wind, sun, and foot traffic. This exposure can create wear and tear on even the most quality-built decks.

**Professional** Inspections can begin at less than a hundred dollars to several hundred dollars depending upon the length of the inspection.

Now it's time to relax and put your feet up on that perfectly solid railing and enjoy those summer nights.

## May Calendar

**May 1** - May Day, Silver Star Service Day

**May 5** - Cinco De Mayo

**May 14** - Mother's Day

**May 29** - Memorial Day

May is Deck Safety Month

## Homeowner Tips



### Time to Get Your Garden On

Flowers are an inexpensive way to add impact to your home's curb appeal. Make sure your flower beds or potted displays are located where water is easily accessible. Flowers should also be planted where there will be ample sunlight. While some flowers are shade seekers, most are sun worshippers. When choosing blooms, take into consideration the flower's preference.

## May is a Month That's Really Worth Discussing

Let's hear it for May. Not just another pretty face, this month also offers some solid holiday clout.

May 1, Silver Star Service Banner Day - This day honors service members awarded the Silver Star, given to those who showed distinguished valor in combat. It's the 3rd-highest decoration in the United States Armed Forces.

May 1, May Day - May Day originated in medieval Europe to pay tribute to the return of spring, with festivals to celebrate the fertility of future crops, livestock, and people.

May 5, Cinco de Mayo - This day marks

Mexico's victory, led by General Ignacio Zaragoza, over French forces at the Battle of Puebla in 1862,

Mother's Day, May 14th - In 1915, President Woodrow Wilson declared Mother's Day an annual national observance. According to its founder, Anna Jarvis, the day is "to honor the best mother who ever lived - yours."

Memorial Day, May 29 - Today we honor and mourn the men and women military personnel who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Small American flags are placed on each grave in Arlington Cemetery, and a customary wreath will be placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



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## Red White and Blue Salad - A Patriotic Addition to Your Memorial Day BBQ

This easy Red White and Blue Salad is a refreshing side for patriotic BBQs and summer gatherings, like Memorial Day.

Blueberries, strawberries, feta, and greens are tossed with almonds and sprinkled with a light honey citrus vinaigrette that really makes this berry salad a standout!

### INGREDIENTS

#### Salad Dressing

- ¼ cup light extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 3 Tablespoons lime juice
- 2 teaspoons honey
- ½ teaspoon salt

#### Salad

- 5 oz mixed greens
- 6 oz blueberries
- 8 oz strawberries quartered
- ¼ cup sliced almonds
- 4 oz feta cheese crumbled
- Salt & pepper

### INSTRUCTIONS

Whisk all salad dressing ingredients together in a small bowl. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine greens, strawberries, blueberries and almonds. Sprinkle feta cheese on top and toss together.

Drizzle with citrus vinaigrette just prior to serving.



Photo & recipe courtesy of:  
[Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com)