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Maintaining Fences and Gates: A Smart Move

Good fences really can make good neighbors and neighborhoods. When was the last time you inspected fences, gates and gate hardware around your property to ensure they're still in good working condition?

Ignoring fence and gate maintenance can be extremely costly. Taking measures that will help protect your home, property, children and pets is inexpensive, quick and easy to do.

Fences help protect children from danger, keeping toddlers out of swimming pools or keeping them in the yard, away from busy traffic. Fences can help keep your own pets in your yard, and other animals out. They can reduce your liability by preventing injuries to uninvited guests on your property, or damage or injury caused by escaped pets.

Fencing around the home is especially vulnerable to weather-related damage, including rust. Ground freezing and thawing, wind and general abuse can damage the gate, affecting alignment.

"An important home improvement project should be ensuring that your fences and gates are functioning properly and are protected from rust, a destructive force that can render gate hardware useless," says Jim Paterson, senior vice president of D&D Technologies, which manufactures gate hinges and latches made of ultra-strong engineering polymers. "In our research, we found that when homeowners consider their fencing needs, rusty metal gate hardware that no longer functions properly was their No. 1 concern. Most homeowners are not aware that rust-free and adjustable gate hardware, such as D&D's hinges and latches, is available."

Rusty metal hinges and latches or gate misalignment can lead to gates that no longer close securely, rendering them ineffective. Most of these problems can be easily solved by replacing the gate hardware with rust-free, adjustable products. D&D Technologies latches and hinges are adjustable, self-lubricating and include stainless steel mounting hardware. They require little maintenance and are backed by a limited lifetime warranty.

"Common gravity latches and hinges are inexpensive and function fine when new," Paterson says. "However, as soon as rust sets in or gates move out of alignment, these latches and hinges no longer close without manual assistance."

It's simple to install new hardware and doing so can update the look of your gates and enhance the effectiveness of your gate and fencing.

"Aluminum, vinyl or wood fencing can protect against rust on the fence itself," Paterson says, "but the hardware must still be rust-free and adjustable to ensure the gate will be in working order."

D&D Technologies hardware is now available through fencing contractors, on-line, and under the Stanley or National Hardware brand name at many hardware and home improvement stores. See www.ddtechglobal.com, email info@ddtechusa.com or call (800) 716-0888, ext. 292 for more details or to find a retailer near you.