

HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

After the first year that your new home is occupied, implement a regular inspection program of home maintenance to help prevent major repairs and to protect your home's value. **Remember to disconnect the power source of any electrical or gas system before inspecting, cleaning, or repairing it.**

Use the following checklist to help you during an inspection.

Monthly

Drain two gallons of water from water heater to remove sediment from the bottom of tank.

Replace carbon cartridge of water filter (point-of-service, activated carbon unit).

Test smoke alarms with a smoke source (lit cigarette or cotton cord) held 3 inches from unit.

To reduce alarm time during test, blow into the unit to clear the smoke.

Inspect fire extinguisher:

Check indicator on pressure gauge to make certain extinguisher is charged.

Be sure lock pin is intact and firmly in place.

Check discharge nozzle to be sure it is not clogged.

Clean extinguisher and check for dents, scratches, and corrosion.

Inspect plates or pads in humidifier, and clean with a strong laundry detergent. Rinse, then scrape mineral deposits with a wire brush or steel wool.

Clean forced hot-air heating and/or cooling system's air filter to prevent airborne dirt from circulating throughout house. (If metal, remove and wash. If disposable, vacuum once, then replace.)

During summer use, clean room air-conditioner filters:

Wash in mild detergent and water, rinse, and dry thoroughly (if permanent).

Replace the filter if it is disposable.

Check the circuit breakers and fuses.

Spring

If you have an attic fan:

Remove leaves and debris from louvers and louver pivots.

Clean fan blades.

Lubricate motor and pulley bearings with a drop of oil on each pivot and oil port.

Check drive belt and replace if sides are glazed smooth and slippery.

Check belt tension (should deflect 1/2 of an inch when pressed in middle). Replace belt if necessary.

Gas Heater -- Shut off, then check exhaust vent and air shutter openings for dirt and dust. Clean the burner of lint and dirt and vacuum air passages to burner.

Inspect the heating system's fan belt for frayed or worn spots, and check tension. (Should give about 3/4 inch). Keep a spare belt on hand.

Remove debris from gutters and downspouts. (Use wire snake for elbows.)

Check gutter and downspout alignment to be sure rainwater is collected properly and drains away from house. Be sure mountings are secure.

Spot paint worn areas on gutters and downspouts. Repair or caulk holes. Replace any sections that have holes or excessive rust.

Check latches and pivots on storm windows for loose connections or signs of wear. Replace loose or worn parts.

Make sure "weep hole" at bottom of metal windows is clear.

Refill water softener (ionization type) with salts (available from dealer).

Manually open safety valve (temperature-pressure-relief valve) at top of hot water tank to test operation; wear gloves, and use a bucket to catch water as it comes out. Be sure the valve returns to its original position.

Inspect grading around house to be sure water drains away from the house on all sides.

Check inside and outside foundation walls for cracks (settling).

Examine inside of foundation walls for dampness or water stain, which indicates seepage or a leak.

Check bricks or blocks for cracked mortar or loose joints.

Clean out any debris or leaves that have filled or blocked doorways, window wells, and storm drains.

Check painted surfaces for paint failure, water damage, or mildew.

Examine all trim for tightness of fit, damage, and decay.

Inspect condition of caulking where two different materials meet, where wood siding joins the foundation's wall, at inside corners, and where window trim and door trim join the siding.

Check for broken or cracked glass and damaged screens or storm windows.

Examine all hardware on windows and doors. Lubricate moving parts.

Check weather stripping on windows and doors for damage and tightness of fit.

Inspect roof for damaged or loose shingles or blisters.

Examine flashing around chimneys, vent stalks, and roof edges.

Check vents and louvers for free air movement. Clean screen.

Check faucets, hoses, bibs, commodes, and shutoff valves for leaks.

Fall

Cover air-conditioning unit with insulated dust- and moisture-proofed cover.

Seal the attic fan opening with an airtight cover, and insulate.

If you have a humidifier connected to your heating system:

Drain and clean water pan.

Work float arm back and forth to dislodge obstructions.

Ream with a piece of wire or bent clothes hanger to clean water inlet of mineral buildup.

Lubricate motor with a drop or two of 20-weight oil.

Be sure there is water in the reserve tank.

Check flame color on gas furnace (should be blue with little or no yellow).

Inspect the outside of chimney for loose bricks or stones and deteriorating joints. Repair if necessary.

Close shutoff valves to outside faucets and waterlines; drain.

Remove debris from gutters and downspouts.

Check gutter and downspout alignment to be sure rainwater collects properly and drains away from the house.

Refill water softener (ionization type) with salts.

Manually open safety valve at top of hot water tank to test operation; wear gloves and use a bucket to catch water as it comes out. Be sure the valve returns to its original position.

Make sure waterlines and hose bibs are protected from freezing.

Clean leaves and debris from around the outside condenser on heating and cooling systems.

Check weather stripping on windows and doors for damage and tightness of fit.

Check vents and louvers for free air movement. Clean screens.

Inspect faucets, hose bibs, commodes, and shutoff valves for leaks.

Yearly

Clean smoke alarms by pulling cover steadily downward. Remove the power cell. Vacuum any accumulated dust from the sensing-chamber openings. Wash cover with soap and water, dry, and replace. Press test switch.

Electric water heater: Drain tank completely to flush out scale, rust, and sediment. (Attach garden hose from open drain cock to yard or open drain.) Remove heating elements. Soak them in vinegar solution (1 cup vinegar to each gallon of water) and scrape off mineral deposits. **Be sure to cut off power to the heater at the fuse box or circuit breaker before you begin.**

Check sludge level in septic tank. When sludge reaches 1/3 the tank's depth, have a professional pump out the tank to clean it. (Frequency of service depends on the size of the tank and household use. Tanks for houses in which there is a garbage disposal need more frequent service.)

Lubricate heater blower motor and fan with one or two drops of 20-weight oil. (Do not use too much oil.)

Check driveways and walks for cracks/breaks, or erosion that may cause damage.

Check fences, gates, and retaining walls for condition of structure and material.

Inspect flashing around chimneys, vent stalks, and roof edges.

Check all joints, ceramic tiles, and laminated plastics.

Check caulking around sinks, bathtubs, and showers.

Inspect floors for wear and damage. Check particularly where one type of flooring material meets another, such as carpet joining wood or tile.

Every Three Years

Gas Furnace:

Call for professional service.

Check burners and heat-exchange areas for soot, debris, and corrosion. Clean where needed.

Check air intakes to be sure they are unobstructed.

Every Six Years

Discard contents of fire extinguishers and have a professional refill the unit.