

# Preventive Home Maintenance Guide

This Preventive Home Maintenance Guide is designed to help you care for your home. This guidebook should be used at least twice per year as a checklist to maintain your home. Often, the early discovery and correction of a potential problem will save thousands of dollars in the long-term care of your property. If, during the care of your home, you find something that appears unusual or something you do not understand, you may need to contact a qualified expert to further advise you.

SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<b>Exterior</b>
				<b>CHIMNEY</b>
	■			Inspect outside of chimney for loose bricks, stones, deteriorated or cracked mortar joints or, if stucco, look for cracks or loose sections.
	■			Check chimney flashings for leakage.
	■			Inspect interior of chimney for creosote and soot buildup.
	■			Check chimney caps for loose or broken sections; check for obstructions such as bird nests.
	■			Inspect metal chimney for rust, missing rain caps and loose braces.
				<b>GUTTER SYSTEM</b>
■	■			Check for damaged gutters, hangers, downspouts and strainers.
■	■			Remove debris in gutters and downspouts. (Use wire snake for elbows.)
■	■			Check gutter alignment to make sure rainwater collects properly and drains away from house.
■	■			Tighten loose mountings.
■	■			Spot-paint worn areas. Repair or caulk holes. Replace any sections that have holes or excessive rust.
■	■			After cleaning gutters, install wire strainers over openings to downspouts.
				<b>ROOFS</b>
■	■			<b>Shingle Roofs</b> —Check for damaged, loose or missing shingles. Pay special attention to ridge areas, or areas where downspouts from upper roofs discharge onto a lower roof. Replace or repair missing shingles.
■	■			<b>Flat Roofs</b> —Check for blisters, bubbles, open seams and bald areas. If roof is tar and gravel, check for areas of gravel erosion.
■	■			<b>Tile Roofs</b> —Check for loose and broken tiles. Replace damaged tiles.
■	■			Check roof flashing for damage.
■	■			Cut back tree branches from roof to avoid damage to roof surface.
■	■			Check all roof penetrations for signs of deteriorated installation and as a possible source of leaks.

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SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<b>Exterior (continued)</b>
				<b>EAVES</b>
■				Check soffits and fascia for loose and rotted areas and/or for water stains. Note condition of paint, and repaint or repair where necessary.
				<b>EXPOSED FOUNDATION</b>
■				Check exposed foundation areas for evidence of deterioration, movement, dampness and cracking. If masonry, check for deteriorated bricks and mortar voids.
■				Fill in cracks and voids with mortar mix or other sealant.
■	■			Check foundation vent screens for damage. Repair damage as needed with proper materials.
				<b>GRADING</b>
		■		Check grading to ensure drainage away from house. Recommended: 1-inch drop per foot for first 6 feet away from structure.
		■		Inspect for signs of termites or other pest infestation in areas near foundation.
				<b>EXTERIOR WALLS</b>
■				<b>Masonry Walls</b> —Check for deteriorated brick and mortar voids.
■				<b>Stucco Walls</b> —Check for cracking and separating.
■				<b>Wood Walls</b> —Check for rot, loose or damaged wood, caulking and wood/soil contact. If paint deterioration is a result of blistering or bubbling, cause must be determined.
■				<b>Metal, Vinyl, Insulbrick, Shingle and Asbestos Siding</b> —Check for loose or missing components.
■				<b>All Walls</b> —Check for settling, buckling and other evidence of movement.
				<b>VEGETATION</b>
■	■			Keep all vegetation clear of wall surfaces by 6 inches.
				<b>TRIM</b>
■				Check all trim for fit and paint condition.
				<b>WINDOWS AND DOORS</b>
		■		Check doors, windows and trim for finish condition.
■				Check for broken glass or damaged screens.
■				Check all window glazing for loose putty.
■				Clean screens and install.
	■			Clean storm windows and install.
			■	Clean all windows.
	■			Check weather stripping for tight fit. Replace where damaged.
	■			Check caulking where window, door and trim intersects with wall surfaces.
		■		Check all door hardware and lubricate.
■	■			Remove debris from all foundation window wells.
		■		<b>Overhead Garage Doors</b> —Keep tracks clean. Lubricate hinges, rollers, wheels or ball bearings with oil or powdered graphite when in down position.

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SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<b>Exterior (continued)</b>
				<b>PORCHES AND DECKS</b>
■	■			Check all components for rot and insect infestation.
■				Check railings and steps for stability and loose components.
■				Repaint or stain all areas required.
				<b>GROUND AND YARD</b>
	■			Drain outside waterlines and hoses. Store or winterize.
■	■			Check all driveways and sidewalks for cracking, settling or uplifting. Some of these conditions may be a safety hazard and others may direct surface water to the structure. Determine cause and correct.
■	■			Check retaining walls, fences and other wood structures for rot and insect infestations.
SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<b>Structure</b>
				<b>INTERIOR FOUNDATION WALLS</b>
		■		As viewed from the basement or crawl area, check foundation walls for evidence of deterioration, movement or dampness. Patch all cracks and voids in foundation walls.
				NOTE: Minor foundation wall dampness may be normal in older foundations. This generally results in slow surface deterioration only.
				NOTE: All crawl areas should be accessible through an access hatch.
				<b>WOOD FRAMING</b>
		■		Check all exposed wood structural components for evidence of rot or insect infestation. This is usually only possible to observe in the basement or crawl areas. Pay special attention to areas in the vicinity of baths, kitchens or other areas where water could enter.
				<b>SURFACE CRACKS – WALL AND CEILING</b>
		■		Check all interior walls and ceilings for surface cracks. Minor cracks due to normal structure settling and shrinkage are to be anticipated. Larger cracks that grow from year to year may be an indication of significant movement. Also note bulges in wall and ceiling surfaces and monitor any changes.
		■		Check walls and ceilings for evidence of water stains. If stains are noted, determine source of stain.
			■	Check behind blinds, in closets and other areas for evidence of condensation or fungus. This may indicate high humidity levels or moisture penetration.
				<b>DOOR FRAMES</b>
		■		Check door frames for squareness. A change in the operation of a door may indicate significant structural movement, especially if change occurs within a short period of time (six months or less).
				<b>WINDOWS</b>
			■	Check windows for condensation, which may indicate high humidity inside structure.
		■	■	Check double-pane windows. If condensation between glass is noted, the seal may have failed and repair is indicated.
				<b>ATTIC</b>
■	■			Check for water stains on underside of roof sheeting.
■	■			Check for rot, mildew or fungus on wood components. This may indicate high humidity.
■	■			Check to determine that insulation is not wet.
■	■			Check to ensure that roof vents are free of bird nests and that all vent screens are functional.

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SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<h2>Electrical</h2>
				<b>MAIN PANEL</b>
		■		Check main panel for rust or water marks, which may indicate water penetration.
■	■			<b>Breakers</b> —Flip all breakers to OFF and then ON to ensure that no breaker has seized and to ensure proper function.
				NOTE: When you first move in, check that breakers are marked to correspond to rooms or appliances that they service.
■	■			<b>Fuses</b> —Hand-tighten all fuses.
				NOTE: When you first move in, check that fuses are marked to correspond to rooms or appliances that they service.
				NOTE: Keep a supply of new fuses near electrical main panel.
				<b>INDOOR WIRING</b>
		■		Check condition of all lamp cords, appliance cords, extension cords and plugs. Replace at first sign of wear or damage.
				NOTE: If you experience the slightest tingling shock from handling or touching any appliance, disconnect and repair immediately.
				NOTE: If fuses blow or circuit breaker trips frequently, contact an electrician to determine cause and make necessary repairs.
			■	<b>Ground Fault Circuits (GFI)</b> —Test ground fault interrupter (GFI) electrical outlet monthly by pushing test button on GFI receptacle.
				<b>ALUMINUM WIRING</b>
		■		If your inspection report indicated that your home has aluminum wiring, all wire connections should be tightened annually by a qualified electrician.
				<b>OUTDOOR WIRING</b>
■	■			Check all wires leading to house to make sure that they are not loose or frayed.
■	■			Check to make sure that trees and other vegetation are not in contact with outside wiring system.
	■			Check to make sure that all exterior outlets have weather-tight, protective covers.

SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<h2>Plumbing</h2>
				<b>SUPPLY PLUMBING SYSTEM</b>
		■		Have well water tested for potability.
■				Check exposed plumbing supply lines for signs of leaks.
			■	Repair all leaking or dripping faucets.
				NOTE: Insulate pipes located in unheated areas. Do this when you move in or now if you never have done it.
	■			Shut off exterior faucets from interior drain and insulate outside hose beds for winter.
■				Remove winterizing protections for all exterior faucets. Check for leaks.
■			■	<b>Water Filter</b> —(Point-of-service carbon-activated unit.) Every 20 gallons or once every 3 weeks, unless manufacturer says otherwise, replace carbon cartridge.

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SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<h2>Plumbing (continued)</h2>
				<b>WASTE PLUMBING SYSTEM</b>
■				Check exposed drain and plumbing lines for leaks.
■			■	Check and clean all basement and exterior drains and clean as necessary.
			■	Check slow drains and clean as needed.
			■	Clean septic tank as needed. (Pump out every 2-5 years.)
				<b>FIXTURES</b>
■	■			Check sump pump operation. Check screen for debris or dirt, and clean if necessary.
			■	Toilets that run continuously should be repaired.
		■		Check for leakage around or under toilet bowl, sinks, showers and tubs.
		■		Check caulking around all bathroom and kitchen fixtures; repair as necessary.
■				Check lawn sprinkler system for leaky valves and exposed lines.
				<b>WATER HEATERS</b>
		■		<b>Hot Water Heater Tank</b> —Drain hot water heater to remove accumulated sludge and sediment from bottom of tank.
				<b>Electric</b> —Shut off power to water heater prior to draining. Drain tank completely. (Attach garden hose to draincock, and drain to outside or to floor drain.)
				<b>Gas</b> —Shut off gas. Check exhaust vent and air shutter penning for dirt and obstructions. Vacuum air passages to burner and clean burner of dirt and lint.
				Fill tank with water. Return electric power to tank or relight gas burners to tank after tank is refilled.

SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<h2>Heating Systems</h2>
				<b>FORCED AIR SYSTEMS</b>
			■	Check air filters on conventional systems for dust and dirt (to keep air moving freely and to prevent airborne dirt from circulating through house). Clean with vacuum or replace. Change filters at least every three months (during months of furnace operation).
			■	Check electronic air filters for dust and dirt, and clean by following manufacturer's instructions. (Every 2-3 months.)
	■			Clean dirt and dust from around furnace area and air grills and ducts.
				NOTE: Noisy blower sounds should be brought to the attention of a heating system mechanic.
				<b>HUMIDIFIERS AND DEHUMIDIFIERS</b>
			■	Check humidifier water level and adjust.
		■		Clean water pans, water inlet and work float arm back and forth to dislodge obstructions.
			■	Replace pad on drum-type humidifier.
		■		Lubricate motor with drop or two of 20-weight oil.
			■	Shut off water supply to humidifier during humid months and turn on water to humidifier during months when heating system is in operation.

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SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<b>Heating Systems (continued)</b>
				<b>OIL FURNACES AND BOILERS</b>
	■			System should be checked by a qualified mechanic for soot, debris and corrosion. Cleaning and corrective measures should be taken.
	■			Check exhaust pipe from furnace for loose connections or corroded sections. Any debris should be removed from chimney cleanout. Check barometric damper on the exhaust pipe to determine if it rotates freely.
				NOTE: At end of heating season, keep tank filled with oil to prevent condensation inside tank, which could corrode tank and promote leaks.
	■			<b>Heat Exchanger</b> —Due to the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty heat exchanger, the heat exchanger should be checked by a qualified technician.
				<b>GAS FURNACES</b>
			■	If gas odors can be detected, contact gas company immediately.
	■			Check burner flame color (should be blue with little or no yellow).
		■		Furnace should be serviced by a qualified mechanic and system should be checked for loose or corroded sections.
	■			<b>Heat Exchanger</b> —Due to the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty heat exchanger, the heat exchanger should be checked by a qualified technician.
				<b>ALL HOT WATER SYSTEMS</b>
	■			Check radiators and convectors for leakage. Pay particular attention to the valves.
			■	Bleed radiators to remove trapped air once a month during heating season. (Open valves while water is circulating. Close when water begins to trickle out.)
■	■			Lubricate circulating pumps. (Lubricate with 20-weight oil at oil ports.)
	■			Drain and refill expansion tanks.
				<b>ELECTRIC HEAT</b>
			■	A qualified technician should inspect furnace to ensure that all components are operating properly and that no connections are loose or burned out. (Every 2-3 years.)
			■	Check electric baseboard heaters to ensure adequate clearance from combustible materials. (Check frequently.)
				<b>WOOD STOVES</b>
	■			Check chimneys and flues for creosote buildup and clean as needed. (With regular use, yearly cleaning is recommended.)
	■		■	Check clearance of combustibles around wood stove and obtain safe distance as per manufacturer specifications.
	■		■	Clean firebox and check grate.

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SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<h2>Cooling Systems</h2>
				<b>AIR CONDITIONER (CENTRAL UNIT) / HEAT PUMP</b>
■				Clean or replace filters (usually located in the furnace).
■				Remove debris around compressor (located in outdoor cabinet).
■				Flush evaporator drain line. Check condensate tray for buildup.
				<b>AIR CONDITIONER (ROOM UNIT)</b>
■	■			Clean filter (behind air intake grill).
■	■			Remove dirt from compressor, tubing and motor blades.
	■			Cover with insulated dust- and moisture-proof cover inside and out, or remove unit from wall and seal opening.
■				Charge compressor.
				<b>ALL WHOLE-HOUSE FANS (ATTIC)</b>
■				Clean fan blades.
■	■			Lubricate motor and pulley bearings with drop of oil on each pivot and oil port.
■				Check drive belt and replace if sides appear glazed or smooth or if tension is not tight.
■				Dislodge leaves and debris from louver pivots.

SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	
				<h2>Safety Equipment</h2>
				<b>SMOKE ALARMS / CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS</b>
■	■			Test by pressing test button (alarm should sound).
■	■			Replace batteries if not hard-wired unit.
				<b>FIRE EXTINGUISHER</b>
■	■			Check indicator on pressure gauge to be sure extinguisher is charged.
■	■			Be sure lockpin is firmly in place and intact.

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