



## Home Maintenance Guidelines\*

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### Checklist – Spring\*

#### 1) **Air Ducts:**

- a) Consider having the air ducts in your home cleaned if family members suffer excessively from respiratory infections asthma or allergies, there is visible mold growth inside ducts or on other components of your heating and cooling system, the ducts are infested with insects or rodents or excessive amounts of dust and debris and/or particles are actually released into the home from your supply registers.

#### 2) **Appliances:**

- a) Vacuum coils under or behind refrigerators and freezers; contact an appliance pro for service if necessary.

#### 3) **Air Conditioning Units:**

##### a) *Central Air Conditioning*

- i) Make sure the condensing unit located outside is not covered up with leaves, newspaper, etc.
- ii) Change or clean the filters regularly.
- iii) Be sure all access panels are secure, with all the screws in place.
- iv) Set the thermostat in the cooling mode.
- v) Run your air conditioner for a few minutes now, before you need it.
- vi) Scheduling a maintenance call before it gets hot to have a pro check the following items:
  - (1) Check for proper refrigerant (Freon) levels. A low level indicates a leak, to be found and repaired before adding more Freon.
  - (2) Check all electrical components and controls.
  - (3) Clean evaporator and condenser coils, as needed.
  - (4) Oil motors as needed.
  - (5) Calibrate thermostat.
  - (6) Check Condenser for cracks.
  - (7) Check filters.

##### b) *Evaporative Air Conditioner*

- i) Hire a professional to clean unit; check belt tension and adjust if necessary; and replace cracked or worn belt.

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- ii) Clean or replace air filter; clean condenser or evaporator coils and condensate drain; remove debris from outdoor portion of unit.
- c) *Wall and Window Air Conditioning Units*
  - i) Have your unit checked out to make sure it's working properly before you need it.
  - ii) Clean dirt, insects and debris from the grilles and cooling fins.
  - iii) Replace dirty filters.
- 4) **Attic:**
  - a) Make sure all your gable, soffit, and ridge vents are open to allow proper ventilation.
  - b) Make sure insulation covers the entire attic floor; look into hiring a professional to add more to meet recently updated building codes and reduce future cooling and heating costs.
  - c) Check to make sure your attic and/or whole house fans are working properly; consider installing attic or whole house fans.
- 5) **Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Detectors:**
  - a) Change batteries and check to make sure they are operating properly. If you don't currently have carbon monoxide detector, consider having one installed on each floor.
- 6) **Caulking and Grout:**
  - a) Inspect caulking and grout around tubs, showers, and sinks; have it replaced if deteriorating.
- 7) **Clean Carpeting:**
  - a) Have your carpets cleaned regularly to remove the dirt and grit that can wear them out prematurely.
- 8) **Door Sills, Window Sills, and Thresholds:**
  - a) Fill cracks, caulk edges, repaint; replace if necessary.
- 9) **Drain-Waste and Vent System:**
  - a) Flush out system.
- 10) **Heat Pump:**
  - a) Lubricate blower motor.
  - b) If you didn't have an annual check-up done last fall, schedule one now to have a certified professional to inspect the wiring, check belts and replace if needed, and oil the moving parts.
  - c) Arrange for service calls before the start of cooling season to get better attention and have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.
- 11) **Hot-Water Heating System:**
  - a) Lubricate circulating pump and motor.

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### 12) Pest Control:

- a) Termites can cause thousands of dollars worth of property damage before homeowner even realize they have an infestation, and other pests can threaten your family members and pets with bites and diseases.
- b) Contact a pest control specialist for a free inspection and evaluation of your risk and hiring a regular service to keep your home free of all pests, including insects and rodents.

### 13) Screens for Windows and Doors:

- a) Clean screening and repair or replace if necessary; tighten or repair any loose or damaged frames and repaint if necessary; replace broken, worn, or missing hardware; tighten and lubricate door hinges and closers.

### 14) Water Heating:

- a) Every six months you should turn off the power source and drain it completely until it's clear of sediment.
- b) Also inspect flue assembly (gas heater); check for leaks and corrosion.
- c) If repairs are required, contact a service professional.

### 15) Antenna:

- a) Have a professional check antenna and satellite dish supports for possible leak source.

### 16) Basement and Foundation:

- a) Check grading for proper slope away from foundation wall.
- b) Inspect for cracks and moisture and repair if necessary.

### 17) Decks, Porches and Exterior Wood Structures:

- a) Check all decks, patios, porches, stairs and railings for loose members and deterioration, such as cracks, splintering, decay, and insect damage; treat wood, set nails and repair or replace rotted boards, as needed.
- b) If professionally cleaned, sealed and maintained, it should only be necessary to refinish and/or stain your wooden decks every two or three years.
- c) It is also necessary that surfaces be thoroughly cleaned and dried before adding another coat of stain or protective finish.
- d) Remove mold and mildew, fungus, tree sap, grease and bird droppings with the appropriate commercial deck cleaners (or homemade mixtures) and a stiff brushed broom.
- e) Use care and follow manufacturers' directions when using these products, wear eye protection, long pants, long sleeves and gloves, cover surrounding vegetation with plastic, and rinse well.

### 18) Drive way Cracks:

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- a) Asphalt- Remove dirt and weeds debris from cracks, spray with a high-pressure hose spray, treat with weed killer and patch with a special patching product. Hire a professional if more involved repairs are required.

### 19) Exterior Caulking:

- a) Inspect caulking and replace if deteriorating, or hire a handyman to do it for you.

### 20) Flashing:

- a) Check flashings around all surface projections and sidewalls, and replace if necessary.

### 21) Gutters and Downspouts:

- a) Clear/install/repair gutters and downspouts and make sure the runoff is directed away from your home so it can't erode the soil around the foundation or run into your basement or crawl space.
- b) Install gutter accessories to divert water, channel underground drain lines into existing yard drainage or storm sewers, or have a dry well installed at the end of the drainpipe to slowly distribute the water to surrounding soil.

### 22) Landscaping:

- a) Clean out the flowerbeds, removing fallen leaves and blossoms to avoid potential fungus and molds.
- b) Cut back and trim all vegetation and overgrown bushes from structures.
- c) Trim non-fruit trees before they start to grow and both fruit trees and rose bushes before they start to bud to improve their production.
- d) Consider a lawn renovation to eliminate the brown spots and crab grass left over from last summer and reseed bare spots.
- e) Contact a professional service about applying pre-emergent to prevent weeds.
- f) Contact a county extension service or gardening service for advice about proper lawn and garden care for your area.
- g) For all of the above items, a prescreened pro may be your best bet.

### 23) Pipes:

- a) Remove insulation around outdoor water pipes.
- b) Check for leaking around the outside hose bibs and evidence of rust or white lime deposits that may indicate a leak is starting, and replace if necessary.

### 24) Roof:

- a) Inspect roof surface for warping, aging, moss, and cracking, making sure that shingles, shakes or tiles are sound; repair or replace as needed.

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- b) Inspect the flashing around chimneys, skylights and vents.
- c) Seal cracks or openings where water could penetrate.
- d) If you see significant damage or wear, contact a roofing specialist to give you a bid on a roof replacement.
- e) Check eaves, and soffits for signs of water damage, or deteriorating paint.
- f) Repair, repaint or consider wrapping with maintenance-free vinyl or aluminum soffits and fascia.

### 25) Siding:

- a) Inspect siding (especially on the south and storm sides of the house) for evidence of deterioration, including cracks, splintering, decay, and insect damage; clean, treat and repair as needed.
- b) Remember, paint protects wood and stucco surfaces; postponing necessary painting will require more extensive and expensive preparation (scraping, sanding and priming) and repairs before repainting in the future.
- c) **Brick and stone:** check joints between wood and masonry. Waterproof, repair or repoint if necessary.
- d) **Wood:** Look for lifting or peeling paint, splitting wood or areas where the wood grain is separating or "checking" because water is getting into the siding. Hire a painting service if the damage is severe.
- e) **Stucco:** a chalky residue that rubs off on your hand is evidence of oxidation, a deterioration of paint or color coat that reduces stucco's insulating value. If the stucco is cracked, this allows water to get in around windows and doors. If this is the case, have your stucco professionally repaired.
- f) **Trim:** look for peeling paint on the fascia boards, window sills and sashes that could allow water in which can lead to mildew and fungus on the interior of your home behind curtains, blinds and window coverings. Consider installing maintenance free vinyl or aluminum trim.

### 26) Sprinklers:

- a) Check lawn sprinkler system for broken heads, leaky valves and exposed lines and contact a sprinkler service if necessary.

### 27) Water Well:

- a) Consider having well water tested for safety.