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# ***CHECKLIST FOR MAINTAINING YOUR HOME***



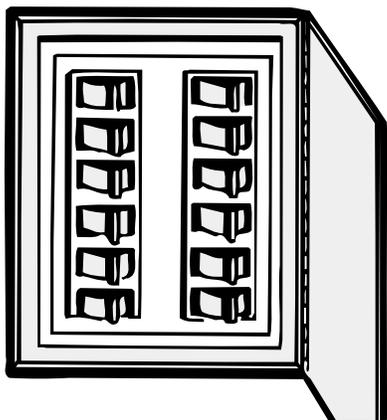
- Test the fire alarm.*
- Check the fire extinguisher.*
- Clean air conditioner filters.*
- Check the circuit breakers.*
- Clean the attic fan.*
- Take leaves out of the gutters.*
- Replac*

# CHECKLIST FOR MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

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.

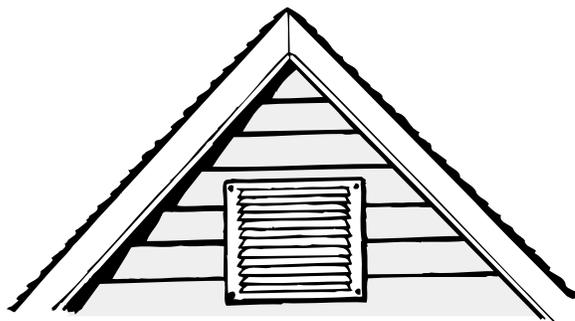
## MONTHLY



- Drain 2 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.
- During heating season, inspect the chimney for creosote buildup. Clean with chimney brushes or scrapers to remove the creosote.
- Clean stovepipe between the stove and the chimney. Check stovepipe for corrosion and holes, and replace if necessary.

- Vacuum electric elements on baseboards.
- 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. Call an electrician if fuses blow or circuit breakers trip frequently.

## SPRING

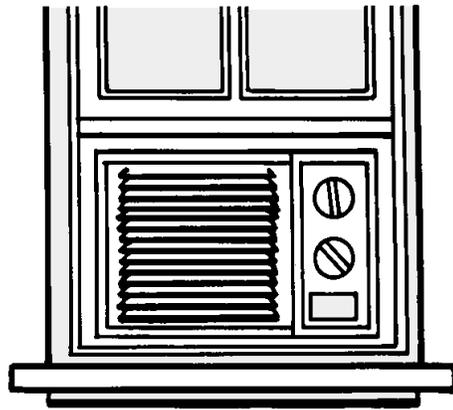


- If you have an attic fan:
  - Remove leaves and clean debris from louvers and louver pivots.
  - Clean fan blades.
  - Lubricate motor and pulley bearings with a drop of oil on each pivot and oil port.
  - Check drive belt and replace if sides are glazed smooth and slippery.
  - Check belt tension (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 of an 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 catchwater 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 and piers for termite tubes and damaged wood.
- 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 antenna guy wires and support straps. Look for cracks where ceilings and walls join.

- Inspect the condition of wiring in exposed areas such as the attic.
- Check faucets, hoses, bibs, commodes, and shutoff valves for leaks.

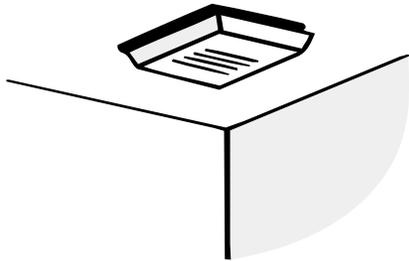
## FALL



- Cover room air-conditioning unit with insulated dust- and moisture-proofed cover, inside and out, or remove unit from wall and seal opening.
- 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).
- Remove cover on thermostat, and dust components carefully with a soft brush. To clean oil film from metal contacts, slide a piece of white paper several times between two closed switch contacts.
- Check fireplace damper to be sure it operates properly. Clean iron grates.
- To clean a wood-burning heater:
  - Scrape interior (especially nooks and crannies) with wire brush.
  - Check for cracks, and repair with stove cement if necessary.
  - Clean exterior completely.
  - If heater has a blower, vacuum the blower or replace any filters, and oil the motor.
- Inspect the outside of chimney for loose bricks or stones and deteriorating joints. Repair if necessary.
- Check chimney for worn flue liner or joints and for birds' nests or other obstructions.

- 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.

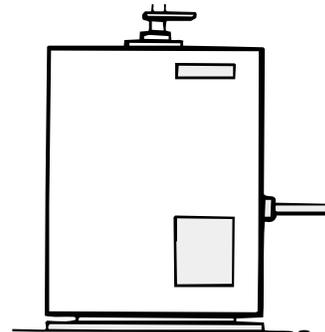
## YEARLY



- 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 of 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.)
- Clean gas space heaters. Be sure lines are clear.
- Clean electric space heater. Be sure dust and dirt are not on heating coils.
- Clean entire unit of room air conditioner:
  - Vacuum dust and lint from condenser and evaporator.
  - Use soap and water to wipe dirt and grime from compressor, tubing, motor, and blade.
  - Clean leaves and debris from outside.
  - Straighten any bent metal fins.
  - Scrape off any rust, then reprime and paint.
- 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.

## EVERY THREE YEARS



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

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