



Homeowner Maintenance Checklist

Upon Taking Ownership

After taking possession of a new home, there are some maintenance and safety issues that should be addressed immediately. The following checklists should help you undertake these improvements:

1. Change the locks on all exterior entrances, for improved security.
2. Check that all windows and doors are secure. Improve window hardware as necessary. Security rods can be added to sliding windows and doors. Consideration could also be given to a security system.
3. Install smoke detectors on each level of the home. Ensure that there is a smoke detector outside all sleeping areas. Replace batteries on any existing smoke detectors and test them. Make a note to replace batteries again in one year.
4. Create a plan of action in the event of a fire in your home. Ensure that there is an operable window or door in every room of the house. Consult with your local fire department regarding fire safety issues and what to do in the event of fire.
5. Examine driveways and walkways for trip hazards. Undertake repairs where necessary.
6. Examine the interior of the home for trip hazards. Loose or torn carpeting and flooring should be repaired.
7. Undertake improvements to all stairways, decks, porches and landings where there is a risk of falling or stumbling.
8. Review your home inspection report for any items that require immediate improvement or further investigation. Address these areas as required.
9. Install rain caps and vermin screens on all chimney flues, as necessary.
10. Investigate the location of the main shut-off for the plumbing, heating and electrical systems.

Weekly Maintenance

Check that the soil around the perimeter of the house is clinging lightly to the edge of the foundation. If there is any space between the soil and the concrete, the soil is too dry and you should increase the frequency with which you water. The foremost cause of foundation failure throughout Texas is lack of moisture control and maintenance by homeowners. Periods of dry weather occur in all seasons. Inspect this item weekly.

Monthly Maintenance

1. Check that fire extinguisher(s) are fully charged. Re-charge if necessary.
2. Examine heating/cooling air filters and replace or clean as necessary.
3. Clean gutters and downspouts. Ensure that downspouts are secure, and that the discharge of the downspouts is appropriate.
4. Remove debris from window wells.
5. Carefully inspect the condition of shower enclosures. Repair or replace deteriorated grout and caulk. Ensure that water is not escaping the enclosure during showering.
6. Check below all plumbing fixtures for evidence of leakage.
7. Repair or replace leaking faucets or showerheads.

Annual Maintenance

1. Replace smoke detector batteries.
2. Have chimneys inspected and cleaned. Ensure that rain caps and vermin screens are secured.
3. Examine the outside of electrical panels, wiring and electrical components for evidence of overheating. Ensure that all components are secure. Flip the breakers on and off to ensure that they are not sticky. (For safety reasons, do not remove covers to electrical panels unless licensed to do so.)
4. If your home is in an area prone to wood destroying insects (termites, carpenter ants, etc.), have the home inspected by a licensed specialist. Preventative treatments may be recommended in some cases.

FALL AND WINTER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Mechanical Systems and Attic Area

- Maintain mechanical, plumbing, electrical equipment and appliances per manufacturer's instructions.
- Clean and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Test and reset ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) breakers.
- Change or clean air conditioner/furnace filter.
- Drain sediment from water heater per manufacturer's instructions (local water quality determines needed frequency).
- Check and operate heating system. Have a professional maintain the system if necessary. **NOTE:** Sometimes the first time the heater is run during the winter it can set off the smoke alarms. If this occurs, open the windows to allow the house to air out and the alarms should stop sounding.
- Adjust registers and confirm that air returns are clear of furniture and draperies.
- Check drain pans and drain lines for furnace and water heaters, clean of any debris.

- Look in the attic (if accessible) to ensure that roof vents are not obstructed.
- Check attic area for evidence of leakage, condensation or vermin activity. Level out insulation if needed.

Exterior of Your Home

- Wrap/protect exterior pipes from freezing during winter months.
- Adjust sprinkler system for winter watering schedule.
- Protect plants, sod and trees from winter freezes. Administer seasonal applications per lawn care plan.
- Check foundation, concrete slabs, and yard for settling of backfill soils; fill in as needed to maintain positive drainage.
- Clean gutters and confirm that downspouts and splash blocks drain away from the house.
- Check overhead garage door, tighten bolts as needed, and lubricate tension springs with oil based spray (ex. Liquid Wrench). Have other repairs done by professionals.
- Adjust or replace weather-stripping on exterior doors as needed.
- Check exterior caulking and paint. Touch up as needed. Clean any mildew or discoloration with a mild water/bleach mixture.
- Check exterior stain surfaces (front door) and refinish as needed.
- Examine the roof for evidence of damage to roof coverings, flashings and chimneys.
- Watch for bird nests or other vermin or insect activity.
- Look at overhead wires coming to the house. They should be secure and clear of trees or other obstructions.
- Clean windows and test their operation. Improve caulking and weather-stripping as necessary.
- Watch for evidence of rot in wood window frames. Paint and repair windowsills and frames as necessary.

Interior of Your Home

- Follow all instructions for safe operation of any fireplace.
- Decorate safely for the holidays. Do not overload circuits or use worn extension cords. **NOTE:** If your holiday lights are not working, always reset the GFCI outlet located in your garage.
- Check and clean sink faucet aerators.
- Inspect for shrinkage damage such as minor drywall cracks and separations of wood trim. Repair as needed.
- Open and close windows regularly to help lubricate tracks.
- Inspect floor coverings and maintain per manufacturers specifications.
- Replace or clean exhaust hood filters.
- Clean, inspect and/or service all appliances as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

SPRING AND SUMMER MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Mechanical Systems and Attic Area

- Test and reset ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) breakers.
- Change or clean air conditioner/furnace filter.
- Drain sediment from water heater per manufacture's instructions (local water quality determines needed frequency).
- Check and operate air conditioning system. Have a professional maintain the system if necessary.
- Adjust registers and confirm that cold air returns are clear of furniture or draperies.
- Check drain pans and drain lines for furnace and water heaters, clean of any debris.
- Look in the attic (if accessible) to ensure that roof vents are not obstructed.
- Check attic area for evidence of leakage, condensation or vermin activity. Level out insulation if needed.

Exterior of Your Home

- Check foundation, concrete slabs, and yard for settling of backfill soils; fill as needed to maintain positive drainage.
- Test exterior pipes and hose bibs for leakage.
- Start and adjust sprinkler system. Reprogram system for spring and summer waterings. Regularly check and adjust sprinkler heads for full coverage.
- Maintain sod, plants and trees. Administer seasonal applications per lawn care plan.
- Clean gutters and confirm that downspouts and splash blocks drain away from the house.
- Check overhead garage door, tighten bolts as needed, and lubricate springs with oil based spray (ex. Liquid Wrench). Have other repairs done by professionals.
- Adjust or replace weather-stripping on exterior doors as needed.
- Check exterior caulking and paint. Touch up as needed. Clean any mildew or discoloration with a mild water/bleach mixture.
- Check exterior stain surfaces (front door) and refinish as needed.
- Examine the roof for evidence of damage to roof coverings, flashings and chimneys.
- Trim back tree branches and shrubs to ensure that they are not in contact with the house. Especially the roof.
- Watch for bird nests other vermin or insect activity.
- Look at overhead wires coming to the house. They should be secure and clear of trees or other obstructions.
- Clean windows and test their operation. Improve caulking and weather-stripping as necessary.
- Watch for evidence of rot in wood window frames. Paint and repair windowsills and frames as necessary.

Interior of Your Home

- Check and clean sink faucet aerators.
- Inspect for shrinkage damage such as minor drywall cracks and separations of wood trim. Repair as needed.
- Open and close windows regularly to help lubricate the tracks.
- Inspect floor coverings and maintain per manufacturer's specifications.
- Replace or clean exhaust hood filters.
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PREVENTION IS THE BEST APPROACH

Although we've heard it many times, nothing could be truer than the old cliché "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Preventative maintenance is the best way to keep your house in great shape. It also reduces the risk of unexpected repairs and improves the odds of selling your house at fair market value, when the time comes.