

Homeowners Tips — Home Maintenance

Regular inspection and maintenance of your home can identify issues before they become costly problems. Inspect both the interior of and exterior of your home. If you identify serious problems, you should have them checked and repaired by licensed and bonded professionals.

Roofs

- Check the roof of both house and garage for damaged, loose or missing shingles. If your roof has wooden shakes, look for warpage.
- The pieces of metal that cover areas where roofing meets other objects on the roof are called "flashing." These areas should be checked for damage, rusting or separation. Flat roofs should be inspected for blisters and bubbles.
- Roofs with gravel or rock should be checked for gravel density and rock erosion.
- Tree branches should not be in contact with the roof.
- Clear the roof of any leaves, loose branches or pine needles.

Exterior

- Gutters and downspouts can become blocked and should be cleared; also check for leakage from rust spots or seams.
- Clean the area under the eaves of any buildup of debris, insects or other nests. Buildup can lead to rotting wood and insect damage.
- Inspect masonry walls for deteriorated brick and mortar; look for cracking or separating of stucco walls.
- Wood surfaces should be repainted if there is deterioration, bubbling or peeling of the paint.
- Check weather-stripping and caulking around doors and windows.
- Replace cracked or broken windows.

Interior

- Inspect walls and ceilings for cracks and bulges. Look for evidence of condensation, mildew or water stains.
- Doorframes that have come out of square in a short time may indicate settling, an improperly hung door or even structural problems.

- Inspect fireplaces and chimneys and clean as needed.
- Clean sliding window tracks at least once a year, and be sure the drain openings are clear.
- Check the plumbing in bathrooms, kitchen and laundry room for leaks and dripping faucets; check the water heater.
- Make sure toilets are secured to the floor and replace caulking around bathtubs, showers and sinks if needed.
- Clean filters on forced-air furnaces monthly when in use.
- Test smoke detectors, and replace the batteries every six months.
- Look in the attic for leaks and evidence of vermin. Make sure the attic vents are properly screened.
- Check the main electrical panel for rust, water marks or the smell of burnt insulation.
- Refer in-depth inspection of your electrical system to a licensed electrician.
- Inspect fire extinguishers

Garage

- Check wooden parts for rot or insect infestation.
- Test automatic garage door openers to verify that they will reverse the direction of the garage door if an obstruction is encountered.
- Check and test floor drains.
- Check for cracks or settling in the garage floor and driveway.

In Addition

Every person in your household should know where to find the following and how and when to use it:

- The fuse box or main circuit breaker.
- The main gas shut-off valve and wrench to shut it off.
- The main water shut-off valve and the appropriate tool to shut it off.
- The closest fire extinguisher.
- Emergency services telephone numbers.