



Home Maintenance Guidelines*

Checklist - Every 6 Months*

1. **Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors:**

- a. Change batteries and check to make sure they are operating properly.
- b. Check with your local building department to see if newer codes recommend adding more smoke detectors than were required when your home was built.
- c. Also consider installing a carbon monoxide detector if you don't currently have any.

2. **Basement and Foundation:**

- a. Check for cracks and moisture and hire a pro to make any necessary repairs.

3. **Toilet:**

- a. Check for leaks in water feed, tank bottom and repair or replace the toilet if necessary.
- b. Consider changing older models for newer, better and more water efficient models.

4. **Interior Caulking and Grout:**

- a. Inspect caulking and grout around tubs, showers, and sinks; replace if deteriorating.

5. **Pipes:**

- a. Check your pipes for rust or white lime deposits that may indicate a leak is starting - replace if necessary.
- b. Check for leaking around the outside hose bibs.
- c. Install insulation around outdoor water pipes to protect from freezing.

6. **Water Heater:**

- a. If you don't routinely flush a quart of water from the tank four times a year, then 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. A leak usually means the bottom of the storage tank has rusted through. You'll probably benefit from hiring a pro to replace it with a more energy efficient model.

7. **Central Air Conditioning Systems:**

- a. At the beginning and end of each cooling season, vacuum out the unit and lubricate the motor.
- b. If the unit is not cooling properly, contact a technician to check the pressure level of the refrigerant.
- c. Arrange for service calls before the start of heating and cooling season to get better attention and have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

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8. 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 consider installing a dry well at the end of the drainpipe to slowly distribute the water to surrounding soil.

9. Natural Stone Tiles and Solid Countertops:

- a. Natural stone such as granite needs regular maintenance every six months by sealing with an impregnating liquid silicon stone sealer to help repel both water and oil based stains more effectively and to make them easier to clean with proper cleaning solutions and methods.
- b. Be very careful to wipe up spills immediately and don't set things like olive oil bottles on natural stone materials for any length of time.

10. Inspect Your Roof:

- a. Check for warping, aging, moss, and cracking, making sure that shingles, shakes or tiles are sound and repair or replace as needed. Inspect the flashing around chimneys, skylights and vents.
- b. Seal cracks or openings where water could penetrate.
- c. If you see significant damage or wear, contact a roofing specialist to give you a bid on a roof replacement.

11. 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. **Brick and stone:** check joints between wood and masonry. Waterproof, repair or repoint if necessary.
- c. **Wood:** look for lifting or peeling paint, splitting wood or areas where the wood grain is separating ("checking"). This is evidence that water is getting into the siding.
- d. **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. Hire a professional to correct the problem.
- e. **Trim:** look for peeling paint on the fascia boards, window sills and sashes that could allow water in to form mildew and fungus on the interior of your home behind curtains, blinds and window coverings.

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12. Landscaping:

- a. Cut back any trees or shrubs that touches the exterior.
- b. Prune deciduous and flowering shrubs regularly to promoting healthy growth, control plant size and shape, and increase the number of flowers and fruit.
- c. Check with a local gardening service or your county extension agent for information about appropriate measure in your area for fertilizing, thatching, aerating and reseeding lawn, and controlling disease and insects in all your landscaping.
- d. Consider hiring professional services to maintain and protect your investment in your landscape.

13. Doors and Windows:

- a. Clean exterior of upper-story windows twice a year; clean and lubricate sliding-glass-door tracks and window tracks.
- b. Lubricate door hinges and locks.
- c. Door and window pros can take the burden off of you.

14. Weather-stripping:

- a. Check the weather-stripping around all doors and windows and replace if necessary to reduce drafts and the loss of heated and cooled air.
- b. Make sure the weather-stripping on the door between your garage and home is intact to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

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