

Home Maintenance suggestions from the American Society of Home Inspectors



Head off problems...

The best way to anticipate problems, or discover them before any damage gets out of hand, is to inspect your home regularly and perform certain routine maintenance tasks.

	Periodically	Spring	Fall	Annually
I FOUNDATION & MASONRY: Basement, Exterior Walls To prevent seepage and condensation problems.				
a. Check basement for dampness and leakage after wet weather.	✓			
b. Check foundation walls, steps, retaining walls, walks, patios, driveways, garage floors, etc., for cracks, heaving, crumbling.		✓		
c. Check chimneys, deteriorated chimney caps, loose and missing mortar.		✓	✓	
d. Maintain grading sloped away from foundations walls.				✓
II ROOFS & GUTTERS: To prevent leaks, condensation, seepage and decay.				
a. Check for damaged, loose or missing shingles, blisters.		✓	✓	
b. Check for leaking, misaligned or damaged gutters, downspouts (leaders), hangers (straps), gutter guards and strainers.		✓	✓	
c. Clean gutters, leaders, strainers, window wells, drains. Be sure downspouts direct water away from foundation.	✓			
d. Cut back tree limbs growing on or over roof.			✓	
e. Check antenna supports for sturdiness and possible source of leakage.				✓
f. Check flashings around roof stacks, vents, skylights, chimneys, for leakage.		✓	✓	
g. Check vents, louvers and chimneys for birds' nests, squirrels, insects.		✓	✓	
h. Check fascias and soffits for paint flaking, leakage and decay.		✓		
III EXTERIOR WALLS: To prevent paint failure, decay and moisture penetration.				
a. Check painted surface for paint flaking or paint failure.		✓		
b. Check siding, shingles and trim for damage, looseness, warping and decay.	✓			
c. Check exterior masonry walls for cracks, looseness, missing or broken mortar.		✓		
d. Cut back and trim shrubbery against sidewalls.		✓	✓	
IV DOORS AND WINDOWS: To prevent air and weather penetration problems.				
a. Check caulking and check for decay around doors, windows, corner boards, joints; recaulk as needed.			✓	
b. Check glazing putty around windows.			✓	
c. Check weatherstripping.			✓	



	Periodically	Spring	Fall	Annually
V ELECTRICAL: For safe electrical performance.				
a. Learn location of electrical panel box for breakers or fuses. Never overfuse.				
b. Trip circuit breakers every 6 months; ground fault interruptors (GFI), monthly.	✓			
c. Mark and label each circuit.	✓			
d. Check condition of lamp cords, extension cords and plugs. Replace at first sign of wear and damage.	✓			
e. Check exposed wiring and cable for wear or damage.				✓
f. If fuses blow or breakers trip frequently, call a licensed electrician.	✓			
g. If you experience slight tingling shock from handling or touching an appliance, disconnect the appliance & have it repaired. If lights flicker or dim, or if appliances go on and off unnecessarily, call a licensed electrician.	✓			
VI PLUMBING: For preventive maintenance.				
a. Check faucets, hose bibbs and valves for leakage.	✓			
b. Drain exterior water lines, hose bibbs, sprinklers, pool equipment in the fall.			✓	
c. Check for leaks at sink and house traps and sewer cleanouts.	✓			
d. Draw off sediment in water heaters monthly or per manufacturer's instructions.	✓			
e. Have septic tank cleaned every 2 years.				
VII HEATING & COOLING: For comfort, efficiency, energy conservation and safety.				
a. Change/clean furnace filters, air conditioner filters, electronic filters as needed.	✓			
b. Clean and service humidifier. Check periodically and annually.	✓			
c. Have oil burning equipment serviced annually.				✓
d. Clean around heating and cooling equipment, removing leaves, dust, overgrown shrubbery, debris. Be sure power is off!	✓			
e. On steam systems, "blow off" or drain low water cutoff per manufacturer's instructions or instruction tag.	✓			
VIII INTERIOR: General house maintenance.				
a. Check bathroom tile joints, tub grouting & caulking. Be sure all tile joints in bathrooms are kept well sealed with tile grout to prevent damage to walls, floors and ceilings below.	✓			
b. To prevent freezing, keep garage doors closed in winter; exposed water lines & drains should be wrapped with insulation.				
c. Close crawl vents in winter and open in summer.		✓	✓	
d. Check underside of roof for water stains, leaks, dampness and condensation, particularly in attics and around chimneys.				✓
e. Keep attic louvers & vents open all year round. Check louver screening.				✓
IX Know the location of:				
a. The main water shutoff valve.				
b. The main electrical disconnect or breaker.				
c. The main emergency shutoff for the heating system.				

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