



Maintaining Your Home

Being a Good Home Owner

Being a home owner can be very rewarding. To keep costs down in the long run, it is important to maintain your home. Maintenance left undone long enough could damage your home creating costly repairs or lowering the market value. We encourage you to do your own research as this list is not exhaustive or tailored to your home but we provide the attached list to help you get started:

A Special note about Strata's

If you are in a strata, many common exterior maintenance items are covered by your strata fees. We have highlighted common items covered by strata management with a "🏠"

Things You Just Need to Know

At some point in owning your home, there will be a need for an emergency system shut down. You and all the adults in your home need to know where these items are and how to use them in an emergency:

- Main Gas Shutoff (typically at gas meter)
- Main Electrical Shutoff (typically at electrical panel)
- Main Water Shutoff (could be nearly anywhere)

Regular Maintenance

These areas of your home should be checked as frequently as possible. Regular maintenance here could save you a lot in the long run.

- Ensure you have fire extinguishers charged and in proximity to the kitchen
- Regularly check stair handrails and all guardrails to ensure they are secure and can hold an adult's bodyweight in a fall
- Test your smoke detectors and replace batteries as needed
- Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI)'s on your breaker panel or at each outlet to ensure they trip correctly when the test button is pressed.

- Ensure all your home's air intakes and exhausts (e.g. dryer vents, furnace air intakes) are not blocked
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- Check and clean the filters in your range hood and ensure the vents are not blocked
- Replace your furnace filter every 6-8 weeks during heating season and during cooling season if you have central A/C or a heat pump
- For hot water or steam heating systems, check your expansion tank to ensure it has not become water logged
- During or after any prolonged rain period, check to ensure drains and weather seals are keeping or draining water as needed to protect your home
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- Monitor caulking in kitchen and baths and maintain as needed

Child Proof Your Home

If you have little ones in your home, or any that regularly visit, you will want to make sure your home is a safe place for visits. This list is not exhaustive but some areas to check are:

- Ensure electrical outlets, cords, lamps, and appliances are safely covered
- Cover sharp corners around fireplaces, tables, or anywhere else children may hit, fall into or hurt themselves
- Put loose items out of reach that could lodge in a child's throat (e.g. coins, keys)
- Put all medicines, toxic cleaners, alcohol, or other consumable dangerous items in safe places children cannot reach (don't underestimate where children can reach)
- Place locks on cabinets that may contain dangerous items
- Ensure your garage doors are adjusted so they will auto reverse with slight pressure (all the way to about 2" off the floor), and that the electric eye is no more than 6" from the ground and works correctly.

Fall Maintenance

Fall is time to get your home ready for the winter ahead and is the busiest of the maintenance seasons. Winter can bring violent weather and long power outages which you should always be ready for.

Heating and Air Systems

- Forced air furnaces and all fireplaces (wood or gas) should be checked annually before the heating season by a professional
 - The pilot light may need to be re-lit if it was shut off for the season
- Boiler/hot water heating systems may need to be started up again for the season and should have annual maintenance performed by a professional
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- Switch off the main power to your central air conditioning and follow manufacturer specifications for winterizing (e.g. put the cover on)
- Vacuum off any radiators or baseboard heaters (you may notice a burning smell when they are first started for the season)
- Vacuum forced air heating grills and if they are easily removable vacuum inside to remove easily accessible dust
- Test your heating system, using the thermostat, to ensure everything works as expected
- Ensure your humidifier is in working order and responds to controls from your humidistat
- If you have a heat recovery ventilator (HRV), check controls, run a cup of water down the condensate drain to ensure your traps are primed, and change the filter every 2 months during the operational season.

Plumbing

- Winterize your outside hose bibs/taps. Disconnect hoses and put them away for the winter
- Protect piping in unheated spaces with insulation or electric heating wire (plug back in if unplugged for the warmer seasons)

- If you have a sump-pump, test to ensure it works correctly and there are no leaks. ⚡

Windows, Doors, and Outdoors

- Ensure weather stripping around exterior doors is in good condition and repair as necessary to seal your home from drafts
- Remove any in-window air conditioners and ensure windows close tightly
- Ensure the man-door from your house to your garage closes tightly so car exhaust cannot come into your home
- Check skylights to make sure they are closed for the season
- Clean leaves and debris from your gutters and downspouts and ensure the downspouts discharge correctly. For above ground discharges, this should be at least 6' from your building ⚡
- Put away your lawn furniture, tools, and fountains to protect them (and your neighbors) from wind and rain
- Use caulking on exterior door and window trim to ensure air and water won't penetrate into your building walls

Winter

Winter is about maintaining the preparation you did for fall and correcting any deficiencies. This is not a time when you want your furnace to fail or pipes to freeze as it is much more expensive to have repaired as an emergency and it could be uncomfortable or dangerous for you and your house to be without heat.

- Change forced air furnace filters every 6-8 weeks during the heating season
- Change HRV filters every 2 months through the heating season
- Clean or change the filters on your humidifier regularly and ensure it is getting good water supply and responding to humidistat controls
 - Do not allow water to drip from your humidifier onto your furnace. It could rust out your furnace elements prematurely
- Make sure outside lighting has working bulbs for the dark season
- Keep Christmas lights safe by ensuring cords run safely and connections are not allowed to stand in water
- Ensure water running off roof systems is correctly draining away from the building
- Operate kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans to avoid any moisture buildup (moisture on windows could indicate moisture is getting into your walls which will cause rot and deterioration of the building)
- During snowfall periods, ensure all air intakes/outputs are free of snow and that snow and ice do not block perimeter drainage (e.g. bottom of stairwells)

Spring

Spring is a great season for renewal in your home. It is a time to clean out after a long winter and get your house ready for warmer months ahead.

- Make sure your window screens are properly mounted and free of holes
- Turn back on any outside hose bibs/taps that may have been winterized
- Prepare your central A/C for the season (remove covers, activate power)
- Disconnect your humidifier (especially important if you have central A/C as it may cause your A/C to ice up)
- Clean out your wood burning appliances and fireplaces. Now would be a good time to have the chimney cleaned out too.
- When heating season is over, turn off your furnace and fireplace pilot lights where and when possible
- Repair any exterior areas where water may have lowered the grade level next to your home and check your visible foundation for any new cracks ⚡
- Repair and fill any damage to the exterior of your home to prevent pests from entering ⚡

- Repair and paint any trim, fencing, fascia that may be in need of service ☺
 - Put some lubrication on door hinges and garage door moving parts
 - Apply spring fertilizers to the grass ☺ and get the patio furniture out of storage
 - Test the pressure relief valve on the hot water tank to ensure correct operation
 - Flush out your hot water tank to remove sediment
 - While you were at all this organizing, perhaps it is time to clean behind the fridge and the stove...
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Summer

Summer is the easiest month of the year for maintaining your home. Time to enjoy all the hard work you did in the spring and if you had any major projects planned, this would be a good time to get at them.

- Keep vegetation cut back from growing against the side of the house ☺
- Pick a medium warm day, and if you are comfortable and the roof pitch is safe, go up and make sure your roof is in good shape. While you are up there, make sure your chimneys are clear, your flashings are in good shape, and look down the vent pipes to make sure there are no blockages (e.g. nests). ☺
- Enjoy the summer, it is far too short