

Annual Home Maintenance Checklist

January

- **Organization:** Look at warranties and product material to check on recommended maintenance for your furnace, equipment, appliances, and tools. Mark your calendar to track scheduled upkeep and service.
- **Inspection:** Clean and test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. January is a good time to replace the batteries in all your detectors. Make sure carbon monoxide detectors are placed throughout the house near every sleeping area to help detect “the silent killer.” Test alarm function monthly and change batteries every six months. Place a smoke detector in each room, on every floor of your home.
- **Fire extinguishers:** Make sure you have properly charged and working fire extinguishers in your home on each level. Consider placing them within easy access to the kitchen, garage, furnace/boiler room, fireplace(s), and wood or pellet stoves.
- **Inventory:** Start by making a room-by-room inventory of everything in your house. In the event of a fire, flood, or other disaster, it will be important when filing an insurance claim. Photographs or video of your possessions can also be helpful.
- **Fireplaces:** If you have a fireplace, make sure there’s no soot or creosote accumulation and consider having a chimney sweep do an inspection.
- **Vents and pipe insulation:** Check to see that your vents aren’t closed to crawl spaces. If you live where pipes can freeze and the floor becomes cold, insulate your pipes, including those under your floors. Vents play an important role in controlling condensation beneath a house.

February

- **Sump pumps:** Check sump pump and be sure that it is functioning correctly. Pour water into the pump silo to raise the float and activate the motor. Your sump pump is an important way to help defend against water accumulating in a basement. When working properly, it can help prevent water damage to your home’s structure and possessions.
- **Water security systems:** Test and make sure water security systems are working properly. These systems will help reduce the risk of water damage in the event of flooding.
- **All water valves:** To keep valves from sticking together, turn all water valves off and on. This includes outdoor faucets and valves to toilets, bathroom and kitchen sinks, laundry, bar, etc.
- **Outlets:** Check and test GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) outlets to make sure they are working properly.
- **Loss prevention:** Check any safes or vaults to ensure valuables are locked up and secured. It is recommended to change your passcode or pin to your safe frequently to avoid any theft or loss.
- **Drainage:** Remove drain traps under sinks and clean them thoroughly. Clean pop-up drain plugs and inspect the linkage for pop-up drains to make sure they are set properly.

March

- **Filters:** Replace filters or wash permanent ones in your HVAC system and humidifier. Filters should be cleaned or changed monthly during peak season (based on filter type no longer than 3 months).
- **Water heater valves:** Test the pressure and temperature relief valve on your water heater by opening it and allowing some water to flow out. If little or no water flows out or it doesn't shut off, replace it. Bad valves can cause explosions. Drain the tank every six months to prevent sediment buildup, which can shorten the lifespan of the heater.
- **Pools:** Keep any pools or hot tubs cleaned. Consider hiring a third party to keep watch over your pool and add chemicals/clean it when you are away from home.
- **Toxins:** Check your home for radon, which is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that is emitted from granite countertops. The test is simple when it involves measuring your home's air. There are home kits available that test for radon for about \$25.
- **Medicine cabinet:** Check the contents of your medicine cabinets and throw away outdated prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines. Be sure all medicines are out of the reach of children or contained in a cabinet equipped with childproof locks.
- **Daylight savings time:** Honor the occasion by replacing batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

April

- **Laundry trap:** Empty your laundry lint trap every time you do a load. Once a month, vacuum lint from the dryer hose. A clogged dryer vent is one of the top causes of house fires.
- **Landscaping:** Keep healthy trees and bushes trimmed and away from utility wires. Take notice of any lopsided trees or other issues that pose harm to your house and get them removed immediately.
- **Air conditioning:** Make an appointment to get your air conditioning system or unit serviced before the heat of summer begins.
- **Outdoor structure inspection:** Look for deterioration, especially signs of rot. Use a small awl to probe posts, railings, and window sills for soft spots.
- **Garden hoses:** Check for leaks. Make temporary repairs with electrical tape. Pry out old washers and replace them. Don't leave hoses connected to outdoor spigots until the danger of frost is completely over.
- **Washing machine:** Shut off the water to the washing machine, remove the water supply hoses and examine them and the washers. Replace worn and damaged ones.
- **Garbage disposal:** Clean your disposal. One method is to grind two trays of ice cubes made from a mixture of one cup white vinegar to one gallon of water.

May

- **Electric outlets:** Check electrical outlets for drafts and install foam gaskets to seal them.
- **Water fixtures:** Invest in low-flow water fixtures. Spend \$10 to \$20 on a new faucet or showerhead to help reduce your water bill.

- **Pest control:** Watch for termites, roaches and other insects that can cause structural damage. Have a professional come and spray around your home to prevent infestation.
- **Gutters:** Inspect gutters to ensure all spikes, straps, and clips are tightly fastened. Use a garden hose to flush debris from downspouts. Make sure downspouts or splash backs direct water at least three feet away from the foundation.
- **Thermostats and automatic sprinkler system:** Adjust them for weather changes.

June

- **Security:** Make sure any alarm systems or surveillance systems that secure your home are working properly.
- **Update technology:** Make sure any technological home features you use on your mobile device, such as, locking your doors, controlling your homes climate, controlling your lights, and controlling your alarm system are all working.
- **Security:** Test gated entry points to your home to ensure they are working properly. (I.e., making sure the gate closes all the way). Make sure all lights outside are working properly, especially when nobody is home to deter unwanted visitors from breaking and entering.
- **Chimney cleaning:** Hire a certified chimney sweep to inspect and clean chimneys. Doing this task now instead of the fall allows plenty of time for repairs before the next heating season. It's also easier to schedule a sweep.
- **Attic fans:** Check operation of attic fans and roof-mounted turbine vents.
- **Automatic light timers & motion-detector systems:** Inspect them to ensure they're working properly, especially if you plan a vacation.

July

- **Moisture:** Inspect your basement walls for signs of moisture. If you detect wetness, run a portable dehumidifier. If condition persists, consult a waterproofing contractor.
- **Roofing:** have a professional inspect your roof. Look for broken or missing shingles, damaged seals, around vent pipes and damaged boards located along the eaves.
- **Underground sprinkler system:** Your sprinkler heads can be dangerous if they are not regularly maintained. Regular maintenance will help ensure that sprinkler heads are kept flush with the ground when not running.
- **Brick or masonry:** Carefully check siding for cracks or missing mortar. Repair with fresh mortar or concrete caulk.
- **Cracks in concrete driveways:** Clean and repair them using epoxy patching material. Repair asphalt driveways using asphalt patching material. Seal asphalt driveways every other year.

August

- **Exercise equipment:** For indoor exercise rooms, make sure all machines are working properly and fix any issues to avoid getting injured by equipment.
- **Electrical outlets:** Look for potential fire hazards, such as frayed wires or loose-fitting plugs. Make sure outlets, fuse boxes and extension cords are not overloaded.



- **Washing machine:** Re-clean your washing machine. Remove soil and detergent residue, odor prevention, dirt, and sand. Cleaning instructions can be found in your appliance manual.
- **Refrigeration:** Use a vacuum with a narrow nozzle to clean condenser coils on the back or underneath your refrigerator.
- **Range hood:** Remove and clean or replace range hood filters.
- **Plumbing:** Fix "water hammer" noises by draining the plumbing system. Open the uppermost faucet (or the one furthest from the water meter) and the lowest (or closest to the meter) and allow the water to flow to a lower-level sink or floor drain. Draining the system restores air to air chambers. Close the lowest faucet and refill the system.

September

- **Leaks:** Find forced air heat duct joints and seal with duct tape.
- **Home energy audit:** Auditors use a blower door test, a thermographic scan, and a perfluorocarbon tracer gas air-infiltration measurement technique to learn how weather-tight your home is.
- **Safety:** Inspect decks, steps, and railings to be sure they're clean, safe, and secure. Make a note of whether they'll need painting or sealing this year.
- **Heating system:** Include filters, pilot lights, and burners, and have the system serviced by a qualified professional.
- Clean and vacuum dust from vents, baseboard heaters and cold-air returns.
- Storm windows for any signs of deterioration and make necessary repairs.

October

- **Grout and caulk:** Look around tubs, sinks, showers, corners, windows, doors, areas where masonry joins siding, or places where vents and other objects protrude from walls. Chip out cracked grout and replace missing grout. Stained, discolored and mildewed caulk should be cleaned with tri-sodium phosphate or other household cleaner. If the caulk remains discolored, remove it and replace it with fresh, mildew-resistant caulk. Early fall is a good time for this task because caulk becomes difficult to apply when the temperature falls.
- **Driveways:** Repair cracked, broken or uneven driveways and walkways to provide a level walking surface. Freezing weather will only make them worse.
- **Fire extinguisher:** Check gauges on home fire extinguishers to ensure a full charge and replace if necessary.



November

- **Lighting:** Check the light bulbs in all your fixtures. Be sure they are the correct wattage as recommended by the manufacturer. Placing lightbulbs with high wattage in fixtures that cannot handle them can cause a fire or electrical damage.
- **Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors:** Recheck detectors when setting clocks back to standard time and change the batteries.
- **Outdoor furniture:** Even furniture designed to stay out year-round will last longer if protected from extreme cold and wet. Store and cover your barbecue, as well.

December

- **Generator:** Follow your manufacturer's instructions. Always keep the generators outside as they emit carbon dioxide. Store fuel in a gas safe container (for portable generators), never operate in wet conditions, and do not plug directly into an outlet in order to avoid "back-feed."
- **Water draining:** From outdoor hoses, faucets and irrigation systems. Place covers on faucets as necessary
- **Circuit testing:** Check the operation of all ground-fault circuit interrupter outlets by pushing the "test" button. The "reset" button should pop out, indicating the receptacle is operating properly. Press in the reset button.
- **Moisture and leak checks:** Check inside bathroom vanities and kitchen sink cabinets for moisture and other signs of leaks. Carefully inspect pipes for condensation or slow drips. Repair the plumbing system if necessary.
- **Holiday decorations:** Unpack and test all electrical decorations. Repair or discard any that do not function properly.



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