

# Home Maintenance Program

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## HOME SET-UP AND MAINTENANCE

### Introduction

When moving into a home, there are some things to take care of. The **Home Set-up** deals with things that are done just once. The **Home Maintenance Program** deals with regular activities.

### Home Set-up

1. **Gutters and Grading** – Make sure gutters (eavestroughs) are clear and the ground around the home slopes down away from the home to help keep the basement or crawlspace dry.
  2. **Locks** – Change the locks on all the doors. Deadbolts improve security and may reduce insurance costs.
  3. **Smoke Detectors** – Install or replace as needed. Usually one is required on every floor level, near the sleeping areas. Smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years, and it is difficult to know how old the existing smoke detectors are. We recommend replacing them all. We strongly recommend **photoelectric** rather than ionization type detectors.
  4. **Carbon Monoxide Detectors** – Provide according to manufacturer's recommendations and local requirements, typically near every sleeping area.
  5. **Electrical Circuits** – Label the circuits in the electrical panel, so you can shut off the right fuse or breaker quickly. If the panel is already labelled, verify that the labelling is correct.
  6. **Heating and Air-Conditioning Systems** – Have these inspected and serviced. We recommend setting up a service contract to ensure the equipment is properly maintained. It makes sense to protect your investment in these expensive systems.
  7. **Duct Cleaning** – This should be done shortly after moving in, and again after renovations. With a properly maintained air filtration system, duct cleaning is not required on a regular basis.
  8. **Wood Burning Appliances** – Have the chimney inspected and swept before using.
  9. **Main Shutoffs** – Find and mark the main shutoff for the heating, electrical and plumbing systems. You need to be able to shut things off quickly in an emergency.
  10. **Well Water** – If the home is on a private water system, the well water should be tested by sending a sample to a lab. Some municipalities have a testing program in place. After this initial test, water quality should be tested at least 3 times every year.
  11. **Backwater Valve** – If the home is on a municipal sewage system, inspect the backwater valve to prevent sewage backup. If the home does not have a backwater valve, consider installing one. Municipal grants and/or home insurance discounts may be available.
  12. **Septic System** – If the home is on a private sewage system, a specialist should inspect the system. Septic systems need to be pumped out every 3 to 5 years.
  13. **Sump Pump** – Test to make sure it will operate when needed. Consider installing a secondary pump with backup power supply for use in case of power outage. A high water level alarm should also be considered.
  14. **Clothes Washing Machines, Dishwashers, Refrigerators** – Use braided steel hoses rather than rubber hoses for connecting the supply piping. This reduces the risk of flooding due to a ruptured hose.
  15. **Clothes Dryers** – Use smooth walled (not corrugated foil or plastic) metal exhaust ducts to vent dryers outdoors. Keep the runs as short and straight as possible.
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16. **Fire Extinguishers** – Provide at least one on every floor. The fire extinguisher near the kitchen should be suitable for grease fires.
  17. **Fire Escape Routes** – Plan fire escape routes from the upper stories. Obtain rope ladders if necessary.
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## **HOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

Good maintenance protects your investment, enhances comfort, extends life expectancies and reduces your costs. It makes great sense. Some homeowners do the maintenance themselves, and others get help with it.

### **SPRING – HOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

1. **Gutters (Eavestroughs)** – Clean to extend their life and keep the basement/crawlspace dry.
  2. **Window Wells** – Clean debris to ensure proper drainage. Install covers if necessary.
  3. **Catch Basins** – Ensure the storm sewer, ditch, culvert or catch basin outside the home is clear to help avoid flooding.
  4. **Railings** – Check that railings on stairs, around openings and on decks are secure and in good condition
  5. **Sliding Doors and Windows** – Clean tracks and make sure drain holes are open to reduce the risk of water damage in the home.
  6. **Garage Door Operator** – Test the auto-reverse mechanism - it should reverse when it meets reasonable resistance or if the “photo-eye” beam is broken (some say test monthly). Lubricate to ensure the operator works freely and minimize the load on the electric motor.
  7. **Garage Door Hardware** – Lubricate to ensure the door moves freely.
  8. **Lawn Irrigation System** – Turn on and inspect the system for leaks and proper operation. Adjust sprinkler heads if needed.
  9. **Smoke Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of a fire (some say test monthly).
  10. **Carbon Monoxide Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of an appliance malfunction (some say test monthly).
  11. **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters and Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters** – Test to make sure they work if there is an electrical problem (some say test monthly).
  12. **Backup Generator** – Test (unless unit automatically runs self test)
  13. **Filters/Air Cleaners on Heating and Air-Conditioning Systems and Heat Recovery Ventilator (if applicable)** – Clean or replace to reduce heating costs, improve comfort and protect the equipment (some say check monthly).
  14. **Air Conditioning System** – Have it serviced before turning it on to maximize life expectancy and reduce operating costs. Make sure there is at least 3 feet clear around the exterior unit. Cut back trees and shrubs as needed. A helpful video can be found [here](#).
  15. **Return Air Grilles** – Open high returns and close low returns in each room to maximize comfort.
  16. **Humidifier** – Turn off and shut off the water so we don’t add humidity in the summer.
  17. **Humidifiers Connected to Furnace** – Close the damper on the humidifier bypass on the furnace to avoid short-circuiting the air-conditioning system.
  18. **Outdoor Hose Bibbs (Faucets)** – Turn on water supply inside the home (unless faucets are the frost-free type) to allow use.
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19. **Floor Drains** – Check that there is water in the traps to prevent sewer odours from getting into the home.
  20. **Sump Pump** – Test to make sure it will operate when needed, to avoid flooding.
  21. **Well Water** – Have well water tested by laboratory to ensure the water is safe to drink (more frequent testing may be appropriate).
  22. **Range Hood Filters** – Clean to maintain efficiency, reduce energy costs and minimize the risk of grease fires (some say check monthly). Check that the dampers open when the fan is on and close when it is off.
  23. **Central vacuum system** – Empty canister and clean filter (if applicable) so system will work effectively (may need to be done more frequently)
  24. **Dishwasher** – Clean the drain filter (may need to be done more frequently).
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### **SUMMER – HOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

1. **Roofing** – Perform annual inspection and tune-up of roof coverings and flashings. This helps prevent leaks and maximizes the life of the roof. This is often performed by a roofer on an annual service agreement.
  2. **Building Exterior** – inspect for weather tightness at siding, trim, doors, windows, wall penetrations, etc. to prevent concealed water damage.
  3. **Exterior Paint and Stain** – Check and improve as needed to prevent rot in exterior wood. Pay attention to wood close to the ground. Wood in contact with soil is prone to rot.
  4. **Exterior Grade** – Check that the ground slopes down away from the building. This helps prevent wet basement and crawlspace problems.
  5. **Garage Door Operator** – Test the auto-reverse mechanism - it should reverse when it meets reasonable resistance or if the “photo-eye” beam is broken (some say test monthly).
  6. **Trees and Shrubs** – Trim back at least 3 feet from air-conditioning to allow the air-conditioning to work properly.
  7. **Trees and shrubs** – Trim back from walls and roofs to prevent damage caused by branches rubbing against the building and to reduce the risk of pests getting into the home.
  8. **Vines** – Trim away from wood building components. Do not allow vines to grow in gutters (eavestroughs) or on roof.
  9. **Attic** – Check for evidence of pests, mould and roof leaks to prevent infestations and damage.
  10. **Smoke Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of a fire (some say test monthly).
  11. **Carbon Monoxide Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of an appliance malfunction (some say test monthly).
  12. **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters and Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters** – Test to make sure they work if there is an electrical problem (some say test monthly).
  13. **Electrical Cords** – Check for wear and fraying
  14. **Chimneys for Fireplaces and other Wood-Burning Appliances** – Have inspected and swept as necessary to reduce the risk of a chimney fire.
  15. **Filters/Air Cleaners on Heating and Air-Conditioning System and Heat Recovery Ventilator (if applicable)** – Clean or replace to reduce heating costs, improve comfort and protect the equipment (some say check monthly).
  16. **Backwater Valve** – Inspect to prevent municipal sewage backup into home. A helpful video can be found [here](#).
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17. **Well Water** – Have well water tested by laboratory to ensure the water is safe to drink (more frequent testing may be appropriate).
  18. **Range Hood Filters** – Clean to maintain efficiency, reduce energy costs and minimize the risk of grease fires (some say check monthly). Check that the dampers open when the fan is on and close when it is off.
  19. **Bathroom Exhaust Fan** – Clean grille to ensure good air flow.
  20. **Central Vacuum System** – Empty canister and clean filter (if applicable) so system will work effectively (may need to be done more frequently).
  21. **Dishwasher** – Clean the drain filter (may need to be done more frequently).
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### **FALL – HOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

1. **Gutters (Eavestroughs)** – Clean to extend their life and keep the basement/crawlspace dry.
  2. **Window Wells** – Clean debris to ensure proper drainage. Install covers if necessary.
  3. **Catch Basins** – Ensure the storm sewer, ditch, culvert or catch basin outside the home is clear to help avoid flooding.
  4. **Lawn Irrigation System** – Turn off and drain the system to prevent pipe damage due to freezing.
  5. **Exterior Vents** – Ensure vent flaps close properly to reduce heat loss and prevent pest entry.
  6. **Garage Door Operator** – Test the auto-reverse mechanism - it should reverse when it meets reasonable resistance or if the “photo-eye” beam is broken (some say test monthly).
  7. **Smoke Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of a fire (some say test monthly).
  8. **Carbon Monoxide Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of an appliance malfunction (some say test monthly).
  9. **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters and Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters** – Test to make sure they work if there is an electrical problem (some say test monthly).
  10. **Backup Generator** – Test (unless unit automatically runs self-test)
  11. **Heating System** – Service before turning on to maximize safety, life expectancy, and to reduce costs.
  12. **Return Air Grilles** – Close high returns and open low returns in each room.
  13. **Filters/Air Cleaners on Heating and Air-Conditioning System and Heat Recovery Ventilator (if applicable)** – Clean or replace to reduce heating costs, improve comfort and protect the equipment (some say check monthly)
  14. **Gas Fireplace** – Service with other gas appliances; include the fireplace in your service plan.
  15. **Outdoor Hose Bibbs (Faucets)** – Shut off water supply inside the home (unless they are the frost-free type) to prevent freezing, damage to pipes and flooding.
  16. **Hot Water Heating Systems** – Bleed radiators to remove air so the radiators will keep the house warm.
  17. **Hot Water Heating Systems** – Lubricate the circulating pump as needed to extend its life (some do not require lubrication).
  18. **Humidifier** – Turn on and open the water supply so that the humidifier will work in the heating season.
  19. **Humidifiers connected to Furnace** – Open the damper on the humidifier bypass on the furnace to allow the humidifier to work in the heating season.
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20. **Electric Baseboard Heaters** – Vacuum to remove dust to increase the efficiency and reduce the risk of fire.
  21. **Well Water** – Have well water tested by laboratory to ensure the water is safe to drink (more frequent testing may be appropriate).
  22. **Sump Pump** – Test to make sure it will operate when needed, to avoid flooding.
  23. **Floor Drains** – Check that there is water in the traps to prevent sewer odours from getting into the home.
  24. **Range Hood Filters** – Clean to maintain efficiency, reduce energy costs and minimize the risk of grease fires (some say check monthly). Check that the dampers open when the fan is on and close when it is off.
  25. **Dishwasher** – Clean the drain filter (may need to be done more frequently).
  26. **Central Vacuum System** – Empty canister and clean filter (if applicable) so system will work effectively (may need to be done more frequently).
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### **WINTER – HOME MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

1. **Garage Door Operator** – Test the auto-reverse mechanism - it should reverse when it meets reasonable resistance or if the “photo-eye” beam is broken (some say test monthly).
  2. **Electrical Cords** – Check for wear and fraying.
  3. **Smoke Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of a fire (some say test monthly).
  4. **Carbon Monoxide Detectors/Alarms** – Test to make sure they work in the event of an appliance malfunction (some say test monthly).
  5. **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters and Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters** – Test to make sure they work if there is an electrical problem (some say test monthly).
  6. **Filters/Air Cleaners on Heating and Air-Conditioning System and Heat Recovery Ventilator (if applicable)** – Clean or replace to reduce heating costs, improve comfort and protect the equipment (some say check monthly).
  7. **Water Heater** – Drain sediment from the tank to optimize performance and reduce costs. Have tankless water heaters flushed by a specialist to maximize performance and life expectancy.
  8. **Backwater Valve** – Inspect to prevent municipal sewage backup into home. A helpful video can be found [here](#).
  9. **Bathtub and Shower Enclosures** – Check caulking and grout to prevent concealed water damage.
  10. **Drains** – Clean sink, bathtub, and shower drains.
  11. **Bathroom Exhaust Fan** – Clean grill to ensure good air flow.
  12. **Range Hood Filters** – Clean to maintain efficiency, reduce energy costs and minimize the risk of grease fires (some say check monthly). Check that the dampers open when the fan is on and close when it is off.
  13. **Dishwasher** – Clean the drain filter (may need to be done more frequently).
  14. **Clothes Dryer Duct** – Have a specialist check and clean if necessary, to improve efficiency, reduce costs and reduce the risk of fire.
  15. **Central Vacuum System** – Empty canister and clean filter (if applicable) so system will work effectively (may need to be done more frequently).
  16. **Refrigerators and Freezers** – Vacuum coils (if accessible at rear) to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
  17. **Fire Extinguishers** – Check gauges to make sure they will operate if needed.
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