

# Seasonal Home Maintenance Tips

Questions? Call 763-593-8074 or 763-593-8092.



## SPRING

### Foundation, Masonry, and Exterior Surfaces

- ❑ Check foundation walls, floors, concrete, and masonry for cracking, deterioration. Repair problems.
- ❑ Check chimney for loose, deteriorating, or missing mortar. Repair problems.
- ❑ Check grading for proper slope away from foundation walls. Build up soil wherever needed.
- ❑ Check all wood surfaces—especially at soil level—for weathering, peeling paint, or dry rot. Fix now or in the summer.
- ❑ Check deck, patio, porch, and exterior stairs and railings for deterioration. Repair now or in the summer.
- ❑ Remove debris from gutters and downspouts. Repair any leaks.

### Roof

- ❑ Check for missing, loose, or damaged shingles. Have them replaced.
- ❑ Check for open seams, blisters, or bald areas on flat roofs. Have these fixed.
- ❑ Check flashing around all surface projections and sidewalls.
- ❑ Check antenna supports for possible leak sources.
- ❑ Check fascia and soffits for deterioration and damage.
- ❑ Check roof louvers for damage and plugging (bird nests, etc).
- ❑ If ice dams were a problem last winter, have your attic properly insulated and ventilated.

### Lawn and Landscape

- ❑ Plant trees, shrubs, flowers, and/or vegetables.
- ❑ Remove left-over leaves, dead plants, and lawn debris. Trim shrubs that brush against the house.
- ❑ Plant grass seed in bare patches.
- ❑ Apply pre-emergent weed preventer, if needed. Fertilize lawn, if needed.
- ❑ Unless trees have been storm damaged, hold off tree trimming until autumn or winter when it's healthier to prune trees.

### Interior

- ❑ Repair or replace torn screens or broken windows. Replace broken sash ropes or hold-open devices.
- ❑ Check basement and crawl space for moisture or leaking water. Take care of all moisture problems.
- ❑ Check your home's cooling system before the hot weather arrives.
- ❑ Open vents in crawl space and vent crawl spaces in basements.

- ❑ Once windows can be opened, do any interior painting, varnishing, or other projects where odor can be a problem.
- ❑ Check smoke detector when you change the clocks ahead.
- ❑ Take note of any slow drains or back-ups. If needed, have sewer pipes cleaned before a big back-up occurs.

## SUMMER

### Cooling System

- ❑ Change filter once a month, lubricate motors.

### Lawn and Landscape

- ❑ Move the lawn mower blade height up so it cuts no more than the top one-third of the grass blade. Your lawn will be healthier, and you'll have fewer weeds if the grass isn't mown shorter than 2 to 2-1/2 inches.
- ❑ If it doesn't rain, water lawn weekly. Deep watering is better than frequent, shallow watering.
- ❑ Take inventory of your yard. Are there areas of grass that never do well? Consider replacing grass with shrubs, perennials, or ground covers. Take photos now for winter planning. Plant grass seed in bare patches.

### Painting & Carpentry

- ❑ Take care of exterior projects: seal decks, paint siding and trim, etc.
- ❑ Repair fences and stair railings.

## FALL

### Roof, Foundation, Masonry, and Exterior

- ❑ Repair damage to roof and valleys.
- ❑ If you have a fireplace, have it cleaned by a professional.
- ❑ Seal driveway and sidewalk cracks.
- ❑ If you have a septic tank, it should be cleaned every two years.

### Doors & Windows

- ❑ Replace loose and missing glazing putty.
- ❑ Replace deteriorating weather-stripping. Replace deteriorating caulking at all openings around doors and windows.
- ❑ Check all doors and window hardware. Replace as needed.

## Heating System

- ❑ Clean and change furnace filters every month or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- ❑ For forced air systems, check fan belt tension, and lubricate fan and motor bearings.
- ❑ For steam systems, check shut-off valve for leaks and drain low water cut-off per manufacturer's instructions.
- ❑ For hot water systems, top off water, bleed radiators, and bring up to recommended pressure.
- ❑ Change smoke detector battery when you set back clocks.
- ❑ Clear debris away from heating and cooling equipment.
- ❑ Have heating system serviced annually.
- ❑ Check boiler pressure relief valve. Check pressure and temperature relief valve on water heater.

## Lawn and Landscape

- ❑ Trim back any tree limbs that hit your roof or house. If needed, arrange to have trees pruned this fall or winter.
- ❑ To ease raking, cut grass to a shorter length and try mowing over leaves. Use chopped up leaves for mulch. Rake leaves off lawns and streets (especially leaves clogging storm sewer openings).
- ❑ If needed, fertilize your lawn once in mid-September and again in early October. Also, consider aerating your lawn.
- ❑ Deeply water trees and shrubs. Consider planting bulbs to enjoy next spring.
- ❑ Shut off and drain outside faucet(s).
- ❑ If you have an underground lawn sprinkler system, check for leaky valves, exposed lines, and back-flow protection.

# WINTER

## Interior

- ❑ Check ceiling at exterior edge and surfaces around windows for evidence of moisture (ice dam problems).
- ❑ Check all tile joints for adequate grouting. RegROUT as needed.
- ❑ Check caulking, look for leaks around showers, bathtubs, sinks, faucets, toilet bases, and supply valves. Repair as needed.
- ❑ Check ceiling beneath bathroom for leakage. Repair as needed.
- ❑ Check all stairs and railings for loose elements. Repair as needed.
- ❑ Test all smoke and safety alarms. If you don't have a smoke detector on every floor, buy and install them.

- ❑ Know the location of all gas shut-off valves and the main water shut-off. Label them.
- ❑ Take care of indoor decorating projects that don't require ventilation. Pipes cleaned before a big back-up occurs.

## Electrical

- ❑ Check for exposed wiring and cable. Also check cords and plugs for damage and repair. Replace at the first sign of wear or damage.
- ❑ Label circuits. Trip circuit breakers and ground fault interrupters to ensure proper function.
- ❑ If fuses blow, circuit breakers trip frequently, or any appliance sparks or shorts out, contact a licensed electrician for repairs.

## Outdoors

- ❑ Shovel sidewalks and driveways before foot or car traffic makes snow hard to remove.
- ❑ Very carefully remove heavy snow from roofs to avoid ice dams. Hire a professional if you are not sure how to do this.
- ❑ If your home is near a fire hydrant, shovel snow away from the hydrant so firefighters can access it quickly.
- ❑ If your home is next to a storm sewer opening, shovel snow away from the sewer grate when temperatures begin to rise.