

Fall Tasks

Preventative Maintenance Checklist

Home maintenance is not only important, it's easy if we understand how our home works. When it comes to property maintenance, an ounce of prevention is indeed worth a pound of cure. With the right maintenance, major problems can be avoided.

Be proactive and stay organized. If your time is at a premium and you need to prioritize what needs to be done around the house before winter sets in, the following list of essential tasks might help.



System	Task
Air conditioning	Cover top of exterior condenser if desired at end of the cooling system.
Heating	Schedule professional service; clean the burners, lubricate fan, motor and pumps. The technician should also test for life threatening carbon monoxide and combusted gas spillage. Check for leaks in forced air heating system ducts and repair as necessary. Bleed air from radiators or connectors on hot water heating systems. Be proactive; there is nothing worse than having the heat go off in the middle of a cold night.
Dampers & registers	Adjust dampers from cooling to heating positions if necessary. Open low registers and close high registers for the heating season.
Smoke detectors	Check your smoke alarm and make sure it's functioning. If you have a carbon-monoxide detector, check it at the same time. Don't forget to replace the batteries.
Backup heating	Make sure your gas fireplace, woodstove, or pellet stove is in good working order. Lay in a supply of wood as early as you can. Burn dry wood and keep fires small and hot to reduce buildup in chimneys. The greener the wood, the faster creosote builds up. Creosote can cause a chimney fire so it's not something you want to let go. Wood burning fireplaces and woodstoves chimneys should be cleaned regularly. Every two years for cleaning is probably okay if your wood has had at least a year to season.
Water heater	Service gas and oil water heaters. Draw sediment from the tank as needed. Check for carbon monoxide.
Humidifier	Service, clean and change water panel as needed. Switch duct damper from summer to winter setting.
Gutters & downspouts	It's one of those chores that no one likes but must be done. In the fall, you may find it necessary to clean a couple times depending on what types of trees you have near the house. Make sure downspouts are free flowing. Extensions and splash blocks must direct water well away from the foundation.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Roof	Check the roof and make any small roof repairs now. This is another important task. At the same time check roof vents and make sure they are clear of any obstructions like bird nests or damage.
Chimney	Inspect chimneys for damage to storm caps and flashing. Cracks in mortar caps should be sealed. If the mortar is cracked, missing or not well bonded to the brick or stone chimney, repointing to improve these joints is necessary.
Trees & bushes	Trees and bushes need to be trimmed back away from the house. Any dead or diseased branches on trees need to be removed. This prevents bugs from taking up residence in your home, and reduces damage to siding, roofs, and gutters from whipping branches. In other words, nothing should be touching your house.
Exterior faucets	Remove hoses from exterior faucets, otherwise you risk flooding of your basement or crawlspace from broken water supply pipes when they thaw.
Weatherize	Caulk joints where materials meet. The US Department of Energy says if you can pull a piece of paper out of a closed door without tearing you're losing energy, so check and replace weather stripping on all doors and windows. Install foam inserts in electrical receptacles on exterior walls.
Storm windows / doors	Replace cracked or broken glass; tighten or repair loose or damaged frames and repair if necessary; replace broken, worn or missing hardware; tighten and lubricate door hinges and closers.
Emergency provisions	Set up your 72-hour stock of emergency provisions. Allocate a space; keep everything you'll need in case the power goes off there. The Red Cross has a comprehensive list of recommended items.

Remember, not every maintenance item will be applicable to your home. Also, there are many more tasks to do and this list of essentials may vary depending on your home and its requirements. Exercise caution before attempting an inspection, maintenance or repair of certain systems. Turn off the electric power and disconnect other utility services. Follow any owner's manual supplied by the manufacturer. If you don't understand a problem or system, consult a professional.

Our homeowner tips are only general guidelines. Since each situation is different, please consult with a specialist regarding your questions or specific issue. More home safety and maintenance information is available online at www.national-inspection.com.

© 2008 All Rights Reserved, National Inspection Services



www.nationalinspection.net

ESTABLISHED 1976

National Inspection Services

Dave Tokarz, president
Direct: (970) 484-1313
Email: nationalinspect@aol.com

*When it comes to your reputation,
refer National Inspection Services.*

Certified ASHI inspector



THE EXPERIENCE.