



Maintenance & Energy Saving Tips

Maintaining your home is simple if you do it a little at a time and understand that it's a continuous process. Improving the energy efficiency of your home can also save you money and make your home more comfortable. Below is a list of suggestions I've compiled based on my observations of homes I inspected over the years.

EXTERIOR

- Clean leaves from the foundation, beneath decks and basement window wells.
- Install gutters and/or gutter extensions on the downspouts where not present and clean the gutters annually as leaves can clog the downspouts and increase the likelihood of water in your basement.
- Close storm windows to improve insulating characteristics and protect your sill from deterioration due to rain and snow.
- Check that the attic insulation is adequate for your area, properly installed and open gaps are filled. Also don't forget to insulate your hatch cover or pull down stairs and cover your whole house fan prior to the winter season.
- Pump the septic tank (frequency depends on usage, but generally every 3-4 years).
- Remove or cover window air conditioners when not in use to eliminate drafts.
- Make sure all roof ventilation systems are open and operative to remove passive moisture from the attic and reduce the potential for ice damming.
- Inspect and sweep the chimney flue as needed.
- Check and repair open mortar joints in the firebox and exterior masonry and replace any spall (a portion of the brick face is missing).
- Caulk around all windows & doors and the basement hatch to eliminate drafts.
- Remove dead tree limbs and trim healthy tree limbs away from utility lines (contact the proper utility company if a limb is stuck on or touching the line).
- Seal any cracks in the driveway or walk so water does not penetrate beneath and result in heaving and/or cracking of the surface material.
- Install or fix loose handrails on exterior steps.
- Stain the deck every 1-2 years.
- Run the sump pump to insure it is operating and draining properly.
- Make sure all grading slopes away from the foundation at least 1" per foot out to 6 feet to allow for proper runoff of rain water.
- Check and repair the roof covering in the spring for damage due to ice or debris.
- Check and repair flashings around chimneys, soil stacks, skylights and any other roof penetrations.
- Clean the exterior of your home (per manufacturer's instructions), replace any rot, scrape peeling paint, prime if necessary and re-paint.
- Prune shrubs (leave at 12-18" of space for proper ventilation).
- As you apply mulch to your foundation plant beds, be sure to leave at least 4-6" between the top of the mulch and the bottom of the sill.

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FIVE STAR INSPECTION SERVICES



INTERIOR

- Check the air filter in a forced air system every 1-2 months and change as needed.
- Insulate any water supply or heat distribution pipes that may be exposed to ambient temperatures during sustained power outages.
- Change the battery in your smoke and CO detectors.
- Open storm windows in the spring to freshen your home's interior.
- Check that the attic insulation is adequate for your area, properly installed and open gaps are filled.
- Make sure all roof ventilation systems are open and operative. Remove your whole house fan cover if you installed one prior to the use.
- Clean the bathroom and kitchen vents.
- Insure that any makeup air ducts to the boiler/furnace are free of obstructions
- Consider installing steel braided hoses to your washing machine
- Install insulation in the rim joist
- Install double glazed insulated windows in the basement
- Clean the evaporator coil on the back of or underneath the refrigerator to make it run more efficiently
- Clean the dryer exhaust duct annually

ANNUAL SERVICE

- Heating system (including humidifiers)
- Air conditioning system
- Radon in air
- Water filtration/treatment.

As with any maintenance project with which a homeowner might not be proficient, it is best to hire a licensed professional contractor to perform routine maintenance, repairs and/or improvements.