



CARING FOR YOUR NEW HOME

# SEASONAL MAINTENANCE TIPS

## SPRING

- After consulting your hot water tank owner's manual, carefully test the temperature and pressure relief valve to ensure it is not stuck. Caution: This test may release hot water that can cause burns.
- Check and clean or replace furnace air filters each month during the heating season. Ventilation system, such as a fresh home air exchanger (heat recovery ventilator), filters should be checked every two months.
- Have fireplace serviced as needed.
- Shut down, drain and clean furnace humidifier, and close the furnace humidifier damper on units with central air conditioning.
- Switch on power to air conditioning and check system. Have it serviced every two or three years.
- Clean or replace airconditioning filter, if applicable.
- Check dehumidifier and drain — clean if necessary.
- Turn OFF gas furnace and fireplace pilot lights where possible.
- Check smoke, carbon monoxide and security alarms, and replace batteries.
- Clean windows, screens and hardware. Check screens and repair or replace if needed.
- Open valve to outside hose connection after all danger of frost has passed.
- Examine the foundation walls for cracks, leaks or signs of moisture, and repair as required.
- Relevel any exterior steps or decks that moved as a result of frost or settling.
- Check for and seal off any holes in exterior cladding that could be an entry point for small pests, such as bats and squirrels.
- Check eavestroughs and downspouts for loose joints and secure attachment to your home, clear any obstructions, and ensure water flows away from your foundation.
- Clear all drainage ditches and culverts of debris.
- Repair and paint fences as necessary — allow wood fences to dry adequately before tackling this task.
- Undertake spring landscape maintenance and, if necessary, fertilize young trees.

## SUMMER

- Monitor basement humidity and avoid relative humidity levels above 60 per cent. Use a dehumidifier to maintain relative humidity below 60 per cent.
- Clean or replace airconditioning filter, and clean or replace ventilation system filters if necessary.
- Check basement pipes for condensation or dripping and, if necessary, take corrective action; for example, reduce humidity and/or insulate cold water pipes.
- Check the basement floor drain to ensure the trap contains water; refill with water if necessary.
- If you have a plumbing fixture that is not used frequently, for example, a laundry tub or spare bathroom sink, tub or shower stall, run some water briefly to keep water in the trap.
- Deep clean carpets and rugs.
- Vacuum bathroom fan grille.
- Disconnect the duct connected to your clothes dryer, and vacuum lint from duct, the areas surrounding your dryer and your dryer's vent hood outside.
- Check security of all guardrails and handrails.
- Check smooth functioning of all windows, and lubricate as required.
- Inspect window putty on outside of glass panes of older homes, and replace if needed.
- Sand and touch up paint on windows and doors.
- Lubricate door hinges, and tighten screws as needed.
- Check for and replace damaged caulking and weatherstripping around mechanical and electrical services, windows and doorways, including the doorway between the garage and the house.
- Lubricate garage door hardware, and ensure it is operating properly.
- Lubricate automatic garage door opener motor, chain and other moving parts, and ensure that the autoreverse mechanism is properly adjusted.
- Inspect electrical service lines for secure attachment where they enter your house, and make sure there is no water leakage into the house along the electrical conduit. Check for overhanging tree branches that may need to be removed.
- Check exterior wood siding and trim for signs of deterioration; clean, replace or refinish as needed.
- Remove any plants that contact — and roots that penetrate — the siding or brick.
- From the ground, check the general condition of the roof and note any sagging that could indicate structural problems requiring further investigation from inside the attic. Note the condition of shingles for possible repair or replacement, and examine roof flashings, such as at chimney and roof joints, for any signs of cracking or leakage.
- Check the chimney cap and the caulking between the cap and the chimney.
- Repair driveway and walkways as needed.
- Repair any damaged steps.

# FALL

- Have furnace or heating system serviced by a qualified service company every two years for a gas furnace or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- If you have central air conditioning, make sure the drain pan under the cooling coil mounted in the furnace plenum is draining properly and is clean.
- Lubricate circulating pump on hot water heating system.
- Disconnect the power to the furnace and examine the forcedair furnace fan belt, if installed, for wear, looseness or noise; clean fan blades of any dirt buildup.
- Remove the grilles on forcedair systems and vacuum inside the ducts.
- Turn ON gas furnace pilot light (if your furnace has one), set the thermostat to “heat” and test the furnace for proper operation by raising the thermostat setting until the furnace starts to operate.
- Once you have confirmed proper operation, return the thermostat to the desired setting.
- Check and clean or replace furnace air filters each month during the heating season. Ventilation system, such as a fresh home air exchanger (heat recovery ventilator) filters should be checked every two months.
- Check to see that the ductwork leading to and from the fresh home air exchanger (heat recovery ventilator) is in good shape, the joints are tightly sealed (aluminum tape or mastic) and any duct insulation and plastic duct wrap is free of tears and holes.
- If the fresh home air exchanger (heat recovery ventilator) has been shut off for the summer, clean the filters and the core, and pour water down the condensate drain to test it.
- Check to see that bathroom exhaust fans and range hoods are operating properly. If possible, confirm that you are getting good airflow by observing the outside vent hood (the exterior damper should be held open by the airflow).
- Check smoke, carbon monoxide and security alarms, and replace batteries.
- Clean portable humidifier, if one is used.
- Replace window screens if damaged.
- Remove interior insect screens from windows to allow air from the heating system to keep condensation off window glass and to allow more free solar energy into your home.
- Ensure windows and skylights are closed tightly; repair or replace weatherstripping, as needed.
- Ensure all doors to the outside are shut tightly, and check other doors for ease of use. Replace door weatherstripping if required.
- If there is a door between your house and the garage, check the adjustment of the selfclosing device to ensure it closes the door completely.
- Cover outside of airconditioning units and shut off power.
- Ensure that the ground around your home slopes away from the foundation wall, so that water does not drain into your basement.
- Clean leaves from eavestroughs and roof, and test downspouts to ensure proper drainage from the roof.
- Drain and store outdoor hoses. Close interior valve to outdoor hose connection and drain the hose bib (exterior faucet), unless your house has frostproof hose bibs.
- Winterize landscaping, for example, store outdoor furniture, prepare gardens and, if necessary, protect young trees or bushes for winter.



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- After consulting your hot water tank owner’s manual, drain off a dishpan full of water from the cleanout valve at the bottom of your hot water tank to control sediment and maintain efficiency.
- Clean humidifier two or three times during the winter season.
- Vacuum bathroom fan grille.
- Vacuum fire and smoke detectors, as dust or spider webs can prevent them from functioning.
- Vacuum radiator grilles on back of refrigerators and freezers, and empty and clean drip trays.
- Check pressure gauge on all fire extinguishers; recharge or replace if necessary.
- Check fire escape routes, door and window locks and hardware, and lighting around outside of house; ensure family has good security habits.
- Check the basement floor drain to ensure the trap contains water; refill with water if necessary.
- Monitor your home for excessive moisture levels — for example, condensation on your windows, which can cause significant damage over time and pose serious health problems — and take corrective action if necessary by reducing humidity levels.
- Check all faucets for signs of dripping and change washers as needed. Faucets requiring frequent replacement of washers.
- If you have a plumbing fixture that is not used frequently, such as a laundry tub or spare bathroom sink, tub or shower stall, run some water briefly to keep water in the trap.
- Clean drains in dishwasher, sinks, bathtubs and shower stalls.
- Test plumbing shutoff valves to ensure they are working and to prevent them from seizing.
- Examine windows and doors for ice accumulation or cold air leaks. If found, make a note to repair or replace in the spring.
- Examine attic for frost accumulation. Check roof for ice dams or icicles.
- Keep snow clear of gas meters, gas appliance vents, exhaust vents, basement windows and low hanging metal roofs.
- Monitor outdoor vents, gas meters and chimneys for ice and snow buildup.
- Consult with an appropriate contractor or your gas utility for information on how to safely deal with any ice problems you may discover.
- Check electrical cords, plugs and outlets for all indoor and outdoor seasonal lights to ensure fire safety; if worn, or if plugs or cords feel warm to the touch, replace immediately.