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MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

Regular care and maintenance of your home is important to keeping it beautiful, functional, safe and healthy.

Neglecting standard maintenance will void certain warranties. It can also result in unnecessary wear and tear on your home, poor air quality, reduced energy efficiency and costly repairs.

Follow these basic tips to keep your home in tip top shape.

HVAC

Energy Star recommends checking your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) filter every month. If the filter looks dirty, change it. At minimum, replace the filter every three months. Consider an annual tune-up to keep your HVAC system working efficiently.

DOOR ADJUSTMENTS

Settling of your house is normal. If your door has shifted slightly after settling, remove the strike plate from the wall with a screwdriver and adjust its positioning with the frame so it closes smoothly. Tighten door knobs, replace worn weather stripping and adjust exterior door thresholds as needed to maintain a good seal.

HARDWOOD FLOORS

Vacuum or sweep your floors frequently and use only those cleaning products recommended by the manufacturer. Expansion and contraction of wood is normal as the seasons change. Consider using a humidifier during heating months to help reduce wood drying and shrinkage.

PAINT AND STAIN

Wood decks and exterior structures will require re-staining or painting over time to protect the integrity of the structure. If roof jacks (pipes coming out of the roof) are painted, they may need touching up every 1 - 2 years. Remember to label your touch-up paint. Store paint and stain in tightly sealed containers in a cool, dry place.

SUMP PUMP

If you have a sump pump, periodically test it by filling the pit with a hose until the float is raised.

OUTDOOR DRAINAGE

Soil should be graded to allow for drainage away from your home's foundation. It's important that newly graded areas be properly landscaped within 1 - 2 months to prevent grade erosion. Failure to do so may result in serious water damage to your home.

GUTTERS

Check gutters and downspouts every 1 – 2 months so they remain clear of debris and are in good working order. Clogged gutters can lead to mold, grade erosion, foundation issues and other problems. Be sure downspouts are connected properly and direct water away from the foundation and foot traffic areas. While you're up on the ladder, inspect your roof for any damage or wear.



STUCCO

Minor cracking in stucco is the result of normal expansion and contraction of the materials. These cracks do not necessarily indicate a structural problem or poor workmanship. Cracks larger than the width of a credit card warrant repair.

CONCRETE FLATWORK AND FOUNDATION

Some slight cracking and settling of concrete is normal. Do not apply salt or other harsh chemicals to concrete. Cracks 1/8" wide or larger should be sealed as soon as they are noticed. Decorative stamped, stained or epoxy concrete may require resurfacing periodically.

OUTDOOR PLUMBING

To avoid burst pipes, be sure to blow out your automatic sprinkler system in the fall before the first freeze. Turn off and flush outdoor showers and water faucets at the same time. Disconnect hoses and hand showers and store them over winter.

INDOOR PLUMBING

Periodically run water and flush toilets in places that don't get used often, such as guest bathrooms. If you have a water softener, check it monthly and add salt if needed. To prolong the life of your water heater, test its pressure relief valve, flush the unit and remove sediment at least once a year.

CAULKING AND GROUT

Remove and replace caulk that has separated from around tubs, showers, sinks, countertops and toilets. Regularly re-seal tile grout and concrete countertops.

DRYER VENT

Don't forget to clean your dryer vent after every load of laundry. Serious damage to homes can be caused by dryer fires.

LIGHT BULBS

Use appropriate light bulb types and wattages rated for your fixtures. Never touch a new halogen bulb with your bare hands. The oil from your fingers can shorten the life of these bulbs.

EXTINGUISHERS AND DETECTORS

Make sure your fire extinguisher is accessible and has adequate pressure. Periodically test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure fresh batteries. To be safe, change your detector batteries every six months.

