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## **PREVENTATIVE HOME MAINTENANCE**

**(Potentially save thousands of \$\$ by following this guide & tips)**

<b>ANNUAL</b>	<b>BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE</b>
<b>CHECK OFF</b>	<b>MONTHLY</b>
	Check furnace filter. Change at least every <b>3 months</b> even if it doesn't look dirty (change more often depending on usage, health issues, pets). The cheapest filter is ineffective. Select MERV Rating of a minimum 8 up to 13. HVAC systems must work harder to move air when a higher rated filter is used. Some systems are equipped to handle this, but if not, the result will be reduced energy efficiency, increased utility bills and decrease the longevity of your furnace.
	Trip and reset GFCIs.
	For unused bathrooms, occasionally run hot & cold water in sink and shower. Flush toilet weekly to avoid stains & mold.
	Test smoke/carbon monoxide alarms.
	<b>SPRING</b>
	<b>INTERIOR</b>
	Change furnace filter at start of cooling season.
	At end of heating season, clean furnace humidifier & replace evaporator pad.
	Clean bathroom exhaust fan. (poses FIRE HAZARD)
	Clean refrigerator coils.
	Clean dishwasher filter (dependent on usage).
	Clean range exhaust vent grease filter and replace charcoal filter (dependent on usage).
	Check/clean washing machine filter. (check manual).
	Check/clean vinyl/fiberglass window's weep holes.
	Clean and lubricate sliding glass door or window tracks (use Silicon spray and NOT regular WD-40).

	<b>EXTERIOR</b>
	Clean out debris from inside of A/C condenser unit with ShopVac. Clean fins from inside and out with a spray can of Coil Cleaner and hose off. Important: first disconnect power at outside box or breaker.
	Check/replace A/C outdoor condenser unit suction line insulation Use Polyethelyne Foam.
	Clean soffit and/or gable vents. (Use water hose or air compressor)
	Clean window wells if no cover. Install cover if not present.
	Lubricate overhead garage doors' springs, rollers, hinges w/ White Lithium spray can. Clean tracks w/ Silicon spray can. (Don't use regular WD40)
	Check and re-caulk exterior windows, doors & trim.
	Cut back trees and shrubs from house walls, roof and A/C.
	Clean gutters (as needed).
	<b>FALL</b>
	<b>INTERIOR</b>
	Change furnace filter at start of heating season.
	Clean range exhaust vent grease filter and replace charcoal filter (dependent on usage).
	Clean dryer vent with Flexible Rod Brush and ShopVac. Check flow & exterior damper while in use. (poses FIRE HAZARD)
	Clean washing machine filter. (check manual).
	Schedule chimney sweep if solid-fuel burning fireplace is used. (poses FIRE HAZARD)
	Schedule HVAC inspection with Licensed Contractor.
	"Exercise" electrical panel breakers (flip off and on at Daylight Savings change).
	Change batteries and test smoke/carbon monoxide alarms.
	Operate all water shut-off valves (WARNING: if they are older and haven't been operated regularly, a possible a leak could be created. (So be prepared to call a plumber.)
	"Drain" water heater sediment until clear. "Flushing" is the complete draining and cleaning of tank. If "Flushing", replace Anode Rod. (Possible issues if it has not been done in last 5 years). Service tankless water heaters for scale buildup.

	<b>EXTERIOR</b>
	Lubricate overhead garage doors' springs, rollers, hinges w/ White Lithium spray can. Clean tracks w/ Silicon spray can. (Don't use regular WD40)
	Shut off outdoor water hose bibbs and remove, drain & store hoses.
	Winterize sprinkler system.
	Clean gutters (as needed).
	Cover A/C outdoor condenser unit (NOT Heat Pump) with plywood and bricks to hold it down. Don't use a wrap as it might trap moisture and provide environment for small critters.
	Test well water quality & bacteria. Be aware of Radon levels.
	<b>WINTER</b>
	<b>INTERIOR</b>
	Pour water into basement floor drain trap.
	Check operation of sump pump float and clean inlet screen.
	Clean bathroom exhaust fan. (poses FIRE HAZARD)
	Check Fire Extinguishers for expiration date, placement, type, condition. Shake ABC-class extinguishers. (Recommend buying a "Fire Blanket" for kitchens or other areas).
	Clean refrigerator coils.
	Clean dishwasher filter (dependent on usage).
	Clean range exhaust vent grease filter and replace charcoal filter (dependent on usage).
	Clean washing machine filter. (check manual).
	Clean Garbage Disposal. Do NOT use with Septic Systems. (See Garbage Disposal No-No's at <a href="http://www.blueflaghi.com/resources">www.blueflaghi.com/resources</a> )

	<b><i>ENERGY TIPS</i></b>
	(See Water Heater Temperature Guide at <a href="http://www.blueflaghi.com/resources">www.blueflaghi.com/resources</a> ) Lower water temp to 120 degrees.
	Have air ducts cleaned every 5 years.
	For attic hatch, caulk trim and install compression bulb type weatherstripping. Insulate properly.
	Install a programmable thermostat.
	<b><i>SAFETY TIPS</i></b>
	(See Fire Hazards & Prevention at <a href="http://www.blueflaghi.com/resources">www.blueflaghi.com/resources</a> )
	Replace exterior door strike plate's screws with 3" screws and one 3" screw in each hinge (shorter if next to a sidelight).
	Clear bushes & shrubs from around windows.
	Store propane tanks outdoors in shade and NOT in your attached garage or shed.
	<b><i>GENERAL TIPS</i></b>
	<b>INTERIOR</b>
	Control indoor relative humidity with a dehumidifier in the Summer, in basement. Purchase a Hygrometer to monitor. (See Humidity Chart at <a href="http://www.blueflaghi.com/resources">www.blueflaghi.com/resources</a> )
	Replace water heater Anode Rod every 3 – 5 years.
	Don't flush anything down toilet except TP even though an item says "flush-able".
	Don't put anything in the toilet cistern tank.
	Check/clean kitchen & bathroom faucet aerator screens.
	Install an under sink mat for kitchens & baths.
	Clean & re-seal shower grout annually. Floor grout 3-5 years.
	Replace washing machine supply hose with stainless steel flexible hose.
	Don't use harmful chemical drain cleaners, it could erode metal pipes. Try a plunger or snake. For hair clogs, use a wet/dry vac, seal around nozzle with wet rag. Or call a plumber to clean out.

	If you have a plumber out to fix something, have them check for main water leaks by turning off all shut-off valves and go read the meter. If you do it yourself without operating the valves on a regular basis, you run the risk of it leaking or breaking then you'll need a plumber.
	Do not close off HVAC air registers/vents in any room.
	Be careful what is plugged into Power Strips. (NO space heaters) (poses FIRE HAZARD)
	The EPA recommends testing for Radon every 5 years OR every 2 years for Mitigation Systems to ensure continuous effectiveness.
	<b>EXTERIOR</b>
	Don't allow sprinkler systems to hit the foundation, deck or house.
	Store firewood 20 ft away from structures.
	Do NOT operate A/C with outside temp below 65 degrees. Cut power to A/C unit in the off-season to avoid accidentally turning on and damaging compressor. Turn off circuit breaker if A/C compressor has dedicated circuit OR pull out and turn upside down the disconnect block/fuse in outside panel. (Not heat pumps)
	Re-coat asphalt driveways every 3 – 5 years.
	Pump septic tank every 3 years (dependent on usage)