



Maintaining the Home

Preventive Home Maintenance Checkup

Maintaining the Home: Preventive Home Maintenance Checkup

Your home can't take care of itself. Your monthly budget should include money for routine maintenance and repair for the house and yard. Plan to set money aside for the large, irregular expenses that occur normally as a house ages. Large expenses include interior and exterior painting, repairs or replacement of heating and air conditioning units and appliances, floor coverings and roof surfaces.

Housing experts recommend setting aside 1 to 3 percent of the market value of your house each year to pay for maintenance and repair costs. While all of these funds may not be needed if your home is new, the accumulated amounts will help you pay for large future expenses, such as re-roofing or replacing a heating unit.

Home maintenance helps provide a healthy, safe environment as it protects your growing financial investment. It is much easier to prevent the development of unsafe, unhealthy conditions and structural damage than to pay medical or repair bills or both.

Who is responsible for home maintenance? The home owner is responsible for what is owned. (Check your owner agreement if you live in a condominium or townhouse.)

Why should you do regular home maintenance?

- To maintain the value of the property.
- A well-maintained home usually sells more

readily and usually brings a higher price.

- A well-maintained house is more comfortable.
- Regular care minimizes unexpected repair work and expense.
- Regular small repairs keep costs from becoming larger.
- A lender's agreement usually requires the owner to maintain the property to protect the lender's financial interest.

What is involved in home maintenance? Cleaning the roof and gutters, cleaning or painting outside wall surfaces, cleaning floors and walls, vacuuming the carpet, keeping sink and shower drains running freely, etc.

What is involved in home repair? Replacing broken glass in windows or doors, replacing warped or worn shingles, repairing a cracked or raised sidewalk or driveway, replacing worn out faucets, repairing a broken stair rail, etc.

How often should you do maintenance and repairs? Maintenance and repairs should be done as soon as the need appears. This sooner-the-better practice helps prevent further damage and keeps repair costs down. At least once every six months, inspect your house and yard thoroughly to identify items needing work.

Who should do the maintenance and repairs? The home owner who does his or her own maintenance and repairs saves money. To learn

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how to do your own maintenance and repairs, you can use:

- Manufacturer's use and care booklet and care guides from repair and cleaning products used.
- Extension leaflets on maintenance and repairs.
- Do-it-yourself publications often available free in builder supply or hardware stores.
- Home maintenance/repair books and videos in the public libraries or stores.
- An experienced neighbor or friend.

If you are not able to do the work, hire a qualified, experienced repair person. Ask friends for personal recommendations. Check the telephone book, neighborhood newspapers or special advertisements to find a reputable repair person. Ask for written estimates, and do not pay in advance for maintenance or repair services.

Include a maintenance/repair category in your monthly budget. If you do not need the money in a particular month, put it in a savings account for the periodic, expensive repairs that will happen as a house ages.

Regular inspection and maintenance of your home will help you keep the house in good condition and maintain its value. Doing maintenance and repair as the need arises also keeps small problems from becoming larger, more costly problems. Having and following a plan for home maintenance and repair will make the job easier. And finally, a well-maintained house will be more comfortable.

Reference:

This material was adapted from publications produced by North Carolina State University Extension. NCSU Cooperative Extension publications can be found on the Web at <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs>.

*This resource is one in a series on **Maintaining the Home** which include:*

Interior Maintenance

Preventive Home Maintenance Checkup
Make a Basic Toolkit for Simple Home Repairs
Selection and Use of Home Cleaning Products
Discovering the Secrets of Successful Storage

Heating

Furnace Care
Fireplace and Chimney Care

Cooling

Evaporative Cooler
Air Conditioner
Ceiling Fans

Plumbing

Fixing Plugged Sink Drains
How to Unclog a Toilet
Repairing Dripping Faucets

Electrical

How to Set or Reset a Circuit Breaker
How to Replace a Fuse

Appliances

How to Buy an Energy Efficient Home Appliance
Choosing a Water Heater

Maintenance:

Dishwasher Care and Dishwasher Cleaning
Dryer Care and Dryer Cleaning
Freezer Care and Freezer Cleaning
Garbage Disposal Care and Cleaning
Range and Oven Care and Range Cleaning
Refrigerator Care and Refrigerator Cleaning
Small Electrical Appliance Care and Cleaning
Washer Care and Cleaning

Flooring

Buying new carpet
Carpet Care and Cleaning
Wood Floors Care and Cleaning
Ceramic Tile Floors Care and Cleaning
Vinyl Floor Coverings Care and Cleaning

Walls

Selecting and Applying Paint
Wallpaper Selection and Cleaning
Repairing Walls

Furniture

Furnishing Your New Home: Color and Design
Selecting Fabric For Home Furnishings

Exterior Maintenance

Home Exterior

Foundations, Basements and Yards
Exterior Walls, Windows, and Doors

Roof

A Guide To Roofs
Roof Maintenance

Landscaping and Lawn Care

Principles of Xeriscape
Watering Your Lawn

Home Safety

Child-Proofing Your Home
Is Your Home Safe From Fire Hazards?
Smoke Alarms Save Lives
Carbon Monoxide Alarms
Are Your Children Safe From Poisons?
Protecting Yourself Against Burglary

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Conservation

Weatherize Your Home
Easy Tips to Save Money and the Planet
How to Stop Air Leaks Around Windows
Energy-Efficient Heating and Cooling
Indoor Water Conservation Tips
Outdoor Water Conservation Tips

Environment Issues

Green Building
Reduce-Reuse-Recycle: Alternatives for Waste Management
Create a home recycling center
Healthy Indoor Air for New Mexico Homes
Dealing with Mold
Household Hazardous Waste
Hazardous Household Substances: Alternatives That Are Relatively Free of Toxic Effects
Radon

Pest Control

Cockroaches and Their Control
Southwest Insects

Accessible Living

Update your home for a lifetime of living
Vision Loss & Hearing Loss
Hand Dexterity, Strength and Range of Motion
Cognitive Difficulties
Mobility Impairments, Balance and Coordination

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