

# Maintenance Advice

## UPON TAKING OWNERSHIP

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After taking possession of a new home, there are some maintenance and safety issues that should be addressed immediately. The following checklist should help you undertake these improvements:

- Change the locks on all exterior entrances, for improved security.
- Check that all windows and doors are secure. Improve window hardware as necessary. Security rods can be added to sliding windows and doors. Consideration could also be given to a security system.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of the home. Ensure that there is a smoke detector outside all sleeping areas. Replace batteries on any existing smoke detectors and test them. Make a note to replace batteries again in one year.
- Create a plan of action in the event of a fire in your home. Ensure that there is an operable window or door in every room of the house. Consult with your local fire department regarding fire safety issues and what to do in the event of a fire.
- Examine driveways and walkways for trip hazards. Undertake repairs where necessary.
- Examine the interior of the home for trip hazards. Loose or torn carpeting and flooring should be repaired.
- Undertake improvements to all stairways, decks, porches and landings where there is a risk of falling or stumbling.
- Review your home inspection report for any items that require immediate improvement or further investigation. Address these areas as required.
- Install rain caps and vermin screens on all chimney flues, as necessary.
- Investigate the location of the main shut-offs for the plumbing, heating and electrical systems. If you attended the home inspection, these items would have been pointed out to you.

## REGULAR MAINTENANCE

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### EVERY MONTH

- Check that fire extinguisher(s) are fully charged. Re-charge if necessary.
- Examine heating/cooling air filters and replace or clean as necessary.
- Inspect and clean humidifiers and electronic air cleaners.
- If the house has hot water heating, bleed radiator valves.
- Clean gutters and downspouts. Ensure that downspouts are secure, and that the discharge of the downspouts is appropriate. Remove debris from window wells.
- Carefully inspect the condition of shower enclosures. Repair or replace deteriorated grout and caulk. Ensure that water is not escaping the enclosure during showering. Check below all plumbing fixtures for evidence of leakage.
- Repair or replace leaking faucets or shower heads.
- Secure loose toilets, or repair flush mechanisms that become troublesome.

### SPRING AND FALL

- Examine the roof for evidence of damage to roof coverings, flashings and chimneys.
- Look in the attic (if accessible) to ensure that roof vents are not obstructed. Check for evidence of leakage, condensation or vermin activity. Level out insulation if needed.
- Trim back tree branches and shrubs to ensure that they are not in contact with the house.
- Inspect the exterior walls and foundation for evidence of damage, cracking or movement. Watch for bird nests or other vermin or insect activity.
- Survey the basement and/or crawl space walls for evidence of moisture seepage.
- Look at overhead wires coming to the house. They should be secure and clear of trees or other obstructions.
- Ensure that the grade of the land around the house encourages water to flow away from the foundation.

- Inspect all driveways, walkways, decks, porches, and landscape components for evidence of deterioration, movement or safety hazards.
- Clean windows and test their operation. Improve caulking and weather-stripping as necessary. Watch for evidence of rot in wood window frames. Paint and repair window sills and frames as necessary.
- Test all ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) devices, as identified in the inspection report.
- Shut off isolating valves for exterior hose bibs in the fall, if below freezing temperatures are anticipated.
- Test the Temperature and Pressure Relief (TPR) Valve on water heaters.
- Inspect for evidence of wood boring insect activity. Eliminate any wood/soil contact around the perimeter of the home.
- Test the overhead garage door opener, to ensure that the auto-reverse mechanism is responding properly. Clean and lubricate hinges, rollers and tracks on overhead doors.
- Replace or clean exhaust hood filters.
- Clean, inspect and/or service all appliances as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

### **ANNUALLY**

- Replace smoke detector batteries.
- Have the heating, cooling and water heater systems cleaned and serviced.
- Have chimneys inspected and cleaned. Ensure that rain caps and vermin screens are secure.
- Examine the electrical panels, wiring and electrical components for evidence of overheating. Ensure that all components are secure. Flip the breakers on and off to ensure that they are not sticky.
- If the house utilizes a well, check and service the pump and holding tank. Have the water quality tested. If the property has a septic system, have the tank inspected (and pumped as needed).
- If your home is in an area prone to wood destroying insects (termites, carpenter ants, etc.), have the home inspected by a licensed specialist. Preventative treatments may be recommended in some cases.

### **PREVENTION IS THE BEST APPROACH**

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Although we've heard it many times, nothing could be more true than the old cliché "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Preventative maintenance is the best way to keep your house in great shape. It also reduces the risk of unexpected repairs and improves the odds of selling your house at fair market value, when the time comes.

Please feel free to contact our office should you have any questions regarding the operation or maintenance of your home. Enjoy your home!