

Smart Words for Smart Homeowners

THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERTS AND THEIR ADVICE ON RELEVANT HOMEOWNER TOPICS

Homeowner's Seasonal Maintenance

YOUR HOME IS YOUR BIGGEST INVESTMENT

Appropriate maintenance of your abode is essential to its safety, cost-effective operation, lasting beauty, market value & long life.

To help you get started, we've assembled these details & an easy to follow matrix of inspection suggestions. Here are a few "rules of thumb" to help you simplify the tasks. This is the when, where & how's of house checkups. Call us when you need help.

SEASONAL CHECKUPS

Seasonal, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual & annual checks & repairs are always appropriate. A matrix of periodic suggestions follows. It will help you keep an eye on what's important. The abbreviations are indicated below.

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Monthly=1 M | Every third month=3 M | Every year=1 Y | Each Fall=Fall |
| Every other month=2 M | Every six months=6 M | Each Spring=Spring | |

✓ 1 M - SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Test all alarms monthly to make sure they are operating properly. Replace if necessary.

✓ 1 M - GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Although disposers are generally self-cleaning, grinding small bones, eggshells, citrus peels & pulp, or a little ice will clean deposits & get rid of odors. Always run COLD water when grinding to harden grease & move waste all the way down the drain lines. Never grind clam or oyster shells, or highly fibrous materials such as cornhusks, or non-organic materials like glass, plastic or metal. Hire a professional to repair or service your garbage disposal.

✓ 1 M - FORCED WARM AIR HEATING SYSTEMS

Replace disposable or clean the reusable filters if they are in good shape. Keep in mind, however, that these filters keep your furnace's heat exchanger clean & efficient, & if dirty or worn they do not clean the air your family breathes by trapping small particles that harbor bacteria, pollen, mold, dust mites & other irritants.

If someone is prone to respiratory ailments or allergies, consider installing a higher-performance HEPA filter or electronic air cleaner designed especially for that purpose.

✓ 1 M - EVAPORATED AIR CONDITIONER

Clean or replace air filter; clean condenser or evaporator coils & condensate drain when in use; be sure to remove debris or snow from outdoor portion of unit each month.

Contact a service pro if additional work is required.

✓ 1 Y - AIR DUCTS

Consider having the air ducts in your home cleaned if family members suffer excessively from respiratory infections asthma or allergies, there is visible mold growth inside ducts or on other components of your heating & cooling system, the ducts are infested with insects or rodents or excessive amounts of dust & debris & / or particles are actually released into the home from your supply registers.

✓ 1 Y - CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

Change this sensor. If you have better things to do why not call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ 1 Y - DECKS & PORCHES

If they're professionally cleaned, sealed & maintained, it should only be necessary to refinish and/or stain your wooden decks every two or three years. It is necessary that surfaces be thoroughly cleaned & dried before adding another coat of stain or protective finish.

Remove mold & mildew, fungus, tree sap, grease & bird droppings from exterior wood with the appropriate commercial deck cleaner (or homemade mixture) & a stiff brushed broom. Clean mildew & fungus by mixing one cup of chlorine bleach per gallon of water, scrub, & rinse well.

Sodium per-carbonate works well to remove dirt, mildew & the weathered gray residue from sunlight degradation. Oxalic acid will remove metal stains around nails & dark tannin stains often found on redwood, cedar & oak. Use care & follow manufacturers' directions when using these products,



wear eye protection, long pants, long sleeves & gloves, cover surrounding vegetation with plastic, & rinse well.

If you have better things to do than do-it-yourself call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ 1 Y - SEPTIC TANKS

Have 500 gallon septic tanks cleaned & pumped at the following intervals:

- ✓ TWO PEOPLE: Every 3 years depending on wash loads & septic size.
- ✓ THREE PEOPLE: Every 2 1/2 years depending on wash loads & septic size.
- ✓ FOUR PEOPLE: Every 2 years depending on wash loads & septic size.
- ✓ FIVE PEOPLE: Every Year depending on wash loads & septic size.

✓ 1 Y - TILE, NATURAL STONE & GROUT

Have your grout professionally sealed every one to three years in medium to heavy-use areas & every three to five years in lightly used areas.

✓ 1 Y - SLIDING DOORS

Clean the track that the rollers sit on with a vacuum cleaner then clean damp rag. Always vacuum the tops & bottoms of the tracks on all four corners. If you can get the sliding door off, clean all rollers top & bottom - then lubricate lightly with silicone spray. Let dry then re-install. This will add 10 years to the performance of the door & save you back as well.

✓ 1 Y - APPLIANCES

Vacuum coils under or behind refrigerators & freezers; contact an appliance pro for service if necessary.

✓ 1 Y - AIR CONDITIONING UNITS

Central Air Conditioning -Make sure the condensing unit located outside is not covered up with leaves, newspaper, etc. Change or clean the filters regularly. Be sure all access panels are secure, with all the screws in place. Set the thermostat in the cooling mode. Run your air conditioner for a few minutes now, before you need it. Scheduling a maintenance call before it gets hot to have a pro check the following items

- 1) Check for proper refrigerant (Freon) levels. A low level indicates a leak, to be found & repaired before adding more Freon.
- 2) Check all electrical components & controls
- 3) Clean evaporator & condenser coils, as needed

- 4) Oil motors as needed
- 5) Calibrate thermostat
- 6) Check Condenser for cracks
- 7) Check filters

✓ 1 Y - Evaporative AIR CONDITIONER

Hire a professional to clean unit; check belt tension & adjust if necessary & replace cracked or worn belt. Clean or replace air filter; clean condenser or evaporator coils & condensate drain; remove debris from outdoor portion of unit.

✓ 1 Y - WALL & WINDOW AIR CONDITIONING UNITS

Have your unit checked out to make sure it's working properly before you need it. Clean dirt, insects & debris from the grilles & cooling fins. Replace dirty filters.

✓ 1 Y - ATTIC

Make sure all your gable, soffit, & ridge vents are open to allow proper ventilation. Make sure insulation covers the entire attic floor; look into hiring a professional to add more to meet recently updated building codes & reduce future cooling & heating costs. Check to make sure your attic & / or whole house Fans are working properly; consider installing attic or whole house fans.

✓ 1 Y - CARBON MONOXIDE & SMOKE DETECTORS

Change batteries & check to make sure they are operating properly. If you : currently have carbon monoxide detector, consider having one installed.

✓ 1 Y - CAULKING & GROUT

Inspect caulking & grout around tubs, showers, & sinks; have it replaced if deteriorating.

✓ 1 Y - CLEAN CARPETING

Have your carpets cleaned regularly to remove the dirt & grit that can wear them out prematurely.

✓ 1 Y - DOOR SILLS, WINDOW SILLS, & THRESHOLDS

Fill cracks, caulk edges, repaint; replace if necessary. If you're strapped for time, a handyman can accomplish these tasks.

✓ 1 Y - HEAT PUMP

Lubricate blower motor. If you didn't have an annual check-up done last fall, schedule one now to have a certified professional to inspect the wiring, check belts & replace if needed, & oil the moving parts. Arrange for service calls before the start of cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

✓ 1 Y - HOT-WATER HEATING SYSTEMS

Lubricate circulating pump & motor.

✓ 1 Y - PEST & CRITTER CONTROL

Termites can cause thousands of dollars worth of property damage before homeowner even realize they have an infestation, & other pests can threaten your family members & pets with bites & diseases. Contact a pest control specialist for a free inspection & evaluation of your risk & hiring a regular service to keep your home free of all pests, including insects & rodents.

✓ 1 Y - SCREENS FOR WINDOWS & DOORS

Clean screening & repair or replace if necessary; tighten or repair any loose or damaged frames & repaint if necessary; replace broken, worn, or missing hardware; tighten & lubricate door hinges & closers. If you want more free time call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ 1 Y - WATER HEATER

Every six months you should turn off the power source & drain it completely until it's clear of sediment. Also inspect flue assembly (gas heater); check for leaks & corrosion. If repairs are required, contact a service professional.

✓ 1 Y - ANTENNA

Have a professional check antenna & satellite dish supports for possible signal leak that may cause poor or suboptimal reception.

✓ 1 Y - BASEMENT & FOUNDATION

Check grading for proper slope away from foundation wall. Inspect for cracks, moisture entry & rodent access. Repair if necessary. Call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ 1 Y - DECKS, PORCHES & EXTERIOR WOOD STRUCTURES

- 1) Check all decks, patios, porches, stairs & railings for loose members & deterioration, such as cracks, splintering, decay, & insect damage; treat wood, set nails & repair or replace rotted boards, as needed.
- 2) If professionally cleaned, sealed & maintained, it should only be necessary to refinish & / or stain your wooden decks every two or three years. It is also necessary that surfaces be thoroughly cleaned & dried before adding another coat of stain or protective finish.
- 3) Remove mold & mildew, fungus, tree sap, grease & bird droppings with the appropriate commercial deck cleaners (or homemade mixtures) & a stiff brushed broom. Clean mildew & fungus by mixing one cup of chlorine bleach per gallon of water, scrub, & rinse well. Sodium per carbonate

works well to remove dirt, mildew & weathered gray residue from sunlight degradation. Oxalic acid will remove metal stains around nails & dark tannin stains often found on redwood, cedar & oak. Use care & follow manufacturers' directions when using these products, wear eye protection, long pants, long sleeves & gloves, cover surrounding vegetation with plastic, & rinse well.

✓ 1 Y - DRIVEWAY CRACKS

Asphalt- Remove dirt & weeds debris from cracks, spray with a high-pressure hose. Spray, treat with weed killer & patch with a special patching product. Hire a professional if more involved repairs are required.

Concrete- the only alternative for cracked driveways & garage floors used to be removal & replacement but these days there are overlays that may be professionally applied to cover surface cracks as long as the concrete is still structurally sound.

✓ 1 Y - EXTERIOR CAULKING

Inspect caulking & replace if deteriorating, or hire a handyman to do it for you.

✓ 1 Y - FLASHING

Check flashings around all surface projections & sidewalls, & replace if necessary.

✓ 1 Y - GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS

Clear /install /repair Gutters & Downspouts & make sure the runoff is directed away from your home so it can't erode the soil around the foundation or run into your walls, basement or crawl space. Install gutter accessories to divert water, channel underground drain lines into existing yard drainage or storm sewers, or have a dry well installed at the end of the drainpipe to slowly distribute the water to surrounding soil. All Gutters must be cleaned every year even if you have no trees on you property. Wind carries seeds, leaves & grass onto your roof, which is washed into your Gutters during every rainfall. If you cant reach (or don't want to) call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ 1 Y - LANDSCAPING

Clean out the flowerbeds, removing fallen leaves & blossoms to avoid potential fungus & molds. Cut back & trim all vegetation & overgrown bushes from structures. Trim non-fruit trees before they start to grow & both fruit trees & rose bushes before they start to bud to improve their production. Consider a lawn renovation to eliminate the brown spots & crab grass left over from last summer & reseed bare spots.

Contact a professional service about applying pre-emergent to prevent weeds as soon as it starts to warm up. Contact a county extension service or gardening service for advice about proper lawn & garden care for your area. For all of the above items, a prescreened pro may be your best bet.

✓ 1 Y - SHUT OFF VALVES

Review the location of all of the shutoff valves in your home with all your family members so you'll be prepared for emergencies.

✓ 1 Y - WHOLE-HOUSE WATER SHUTOFF VALVES

The main shutoff should be beside the meter if you are on City water. If you use a well, the shutoff will be on the house side of the pressure tank. You should also cut power to the tank.

✓ 1 Y - WHOLE-HOUSE HOT WATER SHUTOFF

There should be a valve on the hot water outlet of the water heater, which controls all of the hot water to the house.

✓ 1 Y - TOILET SHUTOFFS

Show your entire family how to shut off the toilet by turning the ribbed oval handle under the tank if it ever starts to overflow.

✓ 1 Y - SINK SHUTOFFS

You should handles beneath the sinks or within the cabinets; the one on the left is usually for hot water, the one on the right for cold.

✓ 1 Y - DISHWASHER SHUTOFFS

Look under the kitchen sink for a reducer coupling & shutoff valve leading to the dishwasher on the inch hot water sink supply line. It could also be between ceiling joists just below the appliance if you have a basement. Washing machine Valves are usually where the washer hoses meet the house supply lines. However, washer hoses are notoriously weak, so consider changing them routinely every year or at least close the valves when leaving home for an extended period. Gas shutoff valve Identify location & show entire family how to shut off. Electrical Panel / Breaker box Identify location & show entire family how to shut off main breaker in an emergency, or flip any circuits back on after an overload. (If it's a common occurrence, consider hiring an electrician to upgrade your panel or wiring).



✓ 1 Y - GAS-FIRED, FORCED-AIR CENTRAL HEAT SYSTEMS

Hire a pro to inspect the thermostat, electrical components & controls, check the heat exchanger, flue, ducts, air flow & air fuel mixture, adjust the burner & oil the motor & circulating Fall n.

Arrange for service calls before the start of heating & cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

✓ 1 Y - HEAT PUMPS

Schedule an annual service call to have a certified professional to inspect the wiring, check belts & replace if needed, & oil the moving parts. Arrange for service calls before the start of heating & cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

✓ 1 Y - OIL-FIRED BOILERS

Hire a professional for annual maintenance including flue cleaning, a fuel-filter change, cleaning & adjustment of the jets. Arrange for service calls before the start of heating & cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

✓ 1 Y - FIREPLACES & CHIMNEYS

- 1) Have your wood burning fireplaces & stoves inspected annually & cleaned & repaired as required to prevent chimney fires, carbon monoxide poisoning & mortar & flashing failure.
- 2) Water leaks can also cause your mortar to deteriorate prematurely. Consider installing a chimney cap to protect your chimney from water, debris, & critters.

✓ 1 Y - CLEAN CARPETING, UPHOLSTERY & DRAPERIES

- 1) Have your carpets, upholstery & draperies cleaned regularly, once every 12 to 18 months, to remove the dirt & grit that can wear them out prematurely.
- 2) You should also have carpets cleaned after any event such as remodeling or holiday parties & eliminate stains as quickly as possible.

✓ 1 Y - APPLIANCES

Inspect appliance hoses & ventilation according to owners' manuals. Hire a service professional if it is necessary to replace them. Vacuum the coils behind your refrigerator & freezer to (found behind or under the appliance) to increase energy efficiency.

✓ 1 Y - GARAGE DOORS

Clean & lubricate hinges, rollers, & tracks; tighten screws. If any more serious repairs are required, contact a garage door pro.

✓ 2 M - FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Check that it's fully charged & recharge if necessary. Be sure you have an adequate number located in kitchen, garage & basement. For additional peace of mind, contact a Fire Prevention & Protection Service.

✓ 2 M - SINKS & TUBS

- 1) Check for moisture or small leaks under sinks, bathtubs, & toilets; have them repaired quickly to avoid costly damage to cabinets & floors.
- 2) Make sure overflow holes on tubs are clear & open to prevent water damage to floors & ceilings. Flush with hot water & baking soda. Be sure to keep strainers in your bathroom drains to catch hair & soap pieces.

✓ 2 M - DRAINS

Never use caustic liquid drain openers on a completely clogged drain because it can severely damage your pipes. If you can't clear a clog after a few attempts, contact a drain-cleaning service or licensed plumber. Using too much force can permanently damage a fixture or pipe. After having a drain cleared mechanically, consider using a non-toxic biological drain cleaner regularly to keep drains clear. (Avoid putting bleach or mouthwash down biologically treated drains because it kills the "friendly bacteria" working to keep your drains clear.)

✓ 2 M - HEAT PUMP

Replace disposable or clean reusable filters. Hire a professional to repair or service your heat pump if necessary.

✓ 2 M - OIL BURNER (PRESSURE TYPE)

Inspect & clean. Do not hesitate to contact a professional.

✓ 2 M - RANGE HOOD

- 1) Clean grease filter. (Running it through the dishwasher is easiest!) This may need to be done more or less often, depending on how much you cook & / or fry foods.
- 2) If it is too corroded, you may need to hire a service professional.

✓ 2 M - STEAM HEATING SYSTEMS

Test relief valve & replace if necessary; check pressure gauge & drain expansion tank if necessary.

✓ 2 M - WALL FURNACE

- 1) Clean grills. Clean or replace filter.
- 2) For more serious repairs, do not hesitate to contact a pro.

✓ 3 M - FAUCETS

- 1) Clean aerators. Unscrew, disassemble & wash out debris. Fix leaky faucet s promptly; a leak wastes up to 20 gallons of water a day & can ruin a faucet set.
- 2) Hire a plumbing pro to replace older faucet s with new ones with waterless valve cartridges instead of rubber washers. If you on vacation call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ 3 M - TUB DRAIN ASSEMBLY

Clean out debris; inspect rubber seal & replace if necessary.

✓ 3 M - FLOOR DRAIN STRAINER

Clean out debris & scrub strainer. Hire a contractor to replace the strainer if it is in poor condition.

✓ 3 M - DISHWASHER

Have a service professional clean the strainer, Spray arm & air gap (located on sink).

✓ 3 M - HOT WATER HEATER

Check to make sure no combustibles have been set near the water heater. Keep your water heater in peak form by draining a quart of water from the tank four times a year-this takes less effort than having to turn off the power source & flushing it out entirely twice a year.

If you detect a leak, it usually means rusting through the bottom of the storage tank. You'll probably benefit from hiring a pro to replace it with a more energy efficient model.

✓ 3 M - PEST CONTROL

Perform seasonal pest control quarterly. Consider hiring a pest control service to protect your home & family from insects, vermin & termites damage to your property.

✓ 6 M - SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Change batteries & check to make sure they are operating properly. Check with your local building department to see if newer codes recommend adding more smoke detectors than were required when your home was built. Also consider installing a carbon monoxide detector if you : currently have any.

✓ 6 M - BASEMENT & FOUNDATION

Check for cracks & moisture & hire a pro to make any necessary repairs.

✓ 6 M - TOILET

Check for leaks in water feed, tank bottom & repair or replace the toilet if necessary. Consider changing older models for better.

✓ 6 M - INTERIOR CAULKING & GROUT

Inspect caulking & grout around tubs, showers, & sinks; replace if deteriorating.

✓ 6 M - PIPES

- 1) Check your pipes for rust or white lime deposits that may indicate a leak is starting - replace if necessary. Check for leaking around the outside hose bibs.
- 2) Install insulation around outdoor water pipes to protect from freezing.

✓ 6 M - WATER HEATER

If you : routinely flush a quart of water from the tank four times a year, then every six months you should turn off the power source & drain it completely until it's clear of sediment. Also inspect flue assembly (gas heater); check for leaks & corrosion. A leak usually means the bottom of the storage tank has rusted through. You'll probably benefit from hiring a pro to replace it with a more energy efficient model.

✓ 6 M - CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

At the beginning & end of each cooling season, vacuum out the unit & lubricate the motor. If the unit is not cooling properly, contact a technician to check the pressure level of the refrigerant. Arrange for service calls before the start of heating & cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

✓ 6 M - GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS

- 1) Clear / install / repair Gutters & Downspouts & make sure the runoff is directed away from your home so it can't erode the soil around the foundation or run into your basement or crawl space.
- 2) Install gutter accessories to divert water & channel it to underground drain lines & into existing yard drainage or storm sewers, or consider installing a dry well at the end of the drainpipe to slowly distribute the water to surrounding soil. If you're overwhelmed call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ 6 M - NATURAL STONE TILES & SOLID COUNTERTOPS

- 1) Natural stone such as granite needs regular maintenance every six months by sealing with an impregnating liquid silicon Stone sealer to help repel both water & oil based stains more effectively & be much easier to clean with proper cleaning solutions & methods.

- 2) Be very careful to wipe up spills immediately & : set things like olive oil bottles on Natural Stone materials for any length of time.

✓ 6 M - INSPECT YOUR ROOF

- 1) Check for warping, aging, moss, & cracking, making sure that shingles, shakes or tiles are sound & repair or replace as needed. Inspect the flashing around chimneys, skylights & vents.
- 2) Seal cracks or openings where water could penetrate. If you see significant damage or wear, contact a roofing specialist to give you a bid on a roof replacement.

✓ 6 M - SIDING

Inspect siding (especially on the south & storm sides of the house) for evidence of deterioration, including cracks, splintering, decay, & insect damage; clean, treat & repair as needed.

Brick & Stone check joints between wood & masonry. Waterproof, repair or repoint if necessary.

✓ 6 M - WOOD

Look for lifting or peeling paint, splitting wood or areas where the wood grain is separating ("checking"). This is evidence that water is getting into the siding.

✓ 6 M - STUCCO

A chalky residue that rubs off on your h & is evidence of oxidation, a deterioration of paint or color coat that reduces stucco's insulating value. If the stucco is cracked, this allows water to get in around windows & doors. Hire a professional to correct the problem.

✓ 6 M - TRIM

Look for peeling paint on the fascia boards, windowsills & sashes that could allow water in to form mildew & fungus on the interior of your home behind curtains, blind & window coverings.

✓ 6 M - LANDSCAPING

- 1) Cut back any trees or shrubs that touching the exterior.
- 2) Prune deciduous & flowering shrubs regularly to promoting healthy growth, control plant size & shape, & increase the number of flowers & fruit.
- 3) Check with a local gardening service or your county extension agent for information about appropriate measure in your area for fertilizing, thatching, aerating & reseeding lawn, & controlling disease & insects in all your landscaping.
- 4) Consider hiring professional



services to maintain & protect your investment in your landscape.

✓ 6 M - DOORS & WINDOWS

- 1) Clean exterior of upper-story windows twice a year; clean & lubricate sliding-glass-door tracks & window tracks.
- 2) Lubricate door hinges & locks. Re-set hinge screws & replace any incorrect or short screws.
- 3) Door & window pros can take the burden off of you.

✓ 6 M - WEATHER STRIPPING

Check the weather-stripping around all doors, windows, & replace if necessary to reduce drafts & the loss of heated & cooled air.

Make sure the weather-stripping on the door between your garage & home is intact to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

✓ FALL - SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Change batteries & check to make sure they are operating properly. Also consider installing a carbon monoxide detector if you : currently have any.

✓ FALL - CLEAN CARPETING, UPHOLSTERY, DRAPERIES & AIR DUCTS

- 1) Have your carpets, upholstery & draperies cleaned regularly, once every 12 to 18 months, to remove the dirt & grit that can wear them out prematurely.
- 2) Consider having the air ducts in your home cleaned if family members suffer excessively from respiratory infections asthma or allergies, there is visible mold growth inside ducts or on other components of your heating & cooling system, the ducts are infested with insects or rodents, or excessive amounts of dust & debris & / or particles are actually released into the home from your supply registers.

✓ FALL - HEATING

- 1) Forced warm air heating Systems. Before turning on your unit, make sure nothing flammable has been stored next to the furnace over the summer. Also, change the filters regularly. Be sure all access panels are secure, with all the screws in place. Be sure the thermostat is set in the heating mode. Run your heater for a few minutes to burn off the dust that usually collects on the heat exchanger over the summer (: worry, that smell is normal) & to make sure it is in working order before you need it. Arrange for service calls before the start of heating & cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

Consider hiring a pro to perform a furnace maintenance check-up, including these steps

- 2) Inspect thermostat for proper operation. Inspect filter & change or clean as needed.
- 3) Check all electrical components & controls. Oil motors as needed.
- 4) Inspect heat exchanger for possible cracks, which would introduce carbon monoxide into the living space.
- 5) Check airflow. If diminished, it may be necessary to clean the evaporator coil & ductwork.
- 6) Check air fuel mixture, where appropriate.

Fall - Gas Burner

Clean burners & ports, or have them professionally cleaned.

✓ FALL - OIL BURNER

Have your oil burner professionally serviced; lubricate Fall n & motor bearings.

✓ FALL - THERMOSTAT

On older models clean heat sensor, contact points, & contacts; check accuracy & have professionally replaced if necessary. Consider installing a digital thermostat for greater accuracy & control of your cooling & heating needs.

✓ FALL - HEAT PUMP

Schedule an annual service call to have a certified professional to inspect the wiring, check belts & replace if needed, & oil the moving parts. Arrange for service calls before the start of heating & cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

✓ FALL - HOT-WATER HEATING SYSTEM

For steam heating, check shut-off valve for leaks & drain lower water cut-off per manufacturer's instructions. Lubricate pump & motor; bleed air from radiators or convectors. If you have questions, contact a service professional.

✓ FALL - OIL-FIRED BOILERS

Hire a professional for annual maintenance including flue cleaning, a fuel-filter change, cleaning & adjustment of the jets. Arrange for service calls before the start of heating & cooling season to get better attention & have more flexibility when scheduling appointments.

✓ FALL - DOOR & WINDOW WEATHER STRIPPING

Check the weather-stripping around all doors & windows & replace it if necessary to reduce drafts & the loss of heated air. Make sure the weather-stripping

on the door between your garage & home is intact to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

✓ **FALL - FIREPLACE & CHIMNEYS**

The most important maintenance to do regularly is to have a professional clean your flue liners in order to prevent the build up of creosote.

Have your wood burning fireplaces & stoves inspected annually & cleaned & repaired as required to prevent chimney fires, carbon monoxide poisoning & mortar & flashing failure.

Water leaks can also cause your mortar to deteriorate prematurely. Consider installing a chimney cap to protect your chimney from water, debris, & critters.

✓ **FALL - STORM WINDOWS & DOORS**

Inspect all windows & doors - replace any cracked or broken glass, tighten or repair any loose or damaged frames & repaint if necessary; replace broken, worn, or missing hardware; tighten & lubricate door hinges & closers; check for broken or missing glazing. Consider installing dual pane thermal windows to eliminate all need to remove or replace storm windows.

Fall - Garage Doors

Clean & lubricate hinges, rollers, & tracks; tighten screws. If serious repair is required, hire a garage door professional.

✓ **FALL - PEST CONTROL**

- 1) Remember, insects & other critters would Naturally prefer to come indoors out of the rain & cold, if possible, as winter sets in.
- 2) Make sure all vents & other openings are covered & Spray for insects along perimeter of house if you : have a regular pest control service.

✓ **FALL - WATER HEATER**

Every six months you should turn off the power source & drain it completely until it's clear of sediment. Also inspect flue assembly (gas heater); check for leaks & corrosion.

Consult a service professional if any damage is evident.

✓ **FALL - EXTERIOR CAULKING**

Inspect caulking around exterior doors & windows. Replace if necessary.

✓ **FALL - BASEMENT & FOUNDATION**

Check grading for proper slope away from foundation wall. Inspect for cracks & moisture & have professionally repaired if necessary.

✓ **FALL - DECKS & OTHER EXTERIOR WOOD**

- 1) Inspect exterior wood for cracks, splintering, decay, & insect damage; treat & repair as needed. Keep decks clean, removing wet leaves & debris that can cause staining or encourage wood decay, mold & mildew growth.
- 2) Having your deck professionally cleaned & sealed can add years to its life.
- 3) Repair hinges & latches on your gates. Be sure to Spray lubricate moving & mating parts.

✓ **FALL - GUTTERS & DOWNSPOUTS**

Clear / install / repair / seal Gutters & Downspouts & make sure the runoff is directed away from your home so it can't erode the soil around the foundation or run into your basement or crawl Space. Install gutter accessories to divert water, channel underground drain lines into existing yard drainage or storm sewers, or consider installing a dry well at the end of the drainpipe to slowly distribute the water to surrounding soil. If you have better things to do call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ **FALL - LANDSCAPING**

- 1) Cut back any trees or shrubs that touching the exterior of the house or garage.
- 2) Check with a local gardening service or your county extension agent for information about appropriate measures in your area for fertilizing, thatching, aerating & reseeding lawn, & controlling disease & insects in all your landscaping.
- 3) If you'd rather not do it yourself call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ **FALL - PIPES**

- 1) Check your pipes for rust or white lime deposits that may indicate a leak is starting - replace if necessary. Check for leaking around the outside hose bibs.
- 2) Install insulation around outdoor water pipes & valves to protect from freezing. Its also wise to do this to any pipe that extends from the inside through a wall to the outside.

✓ **FALL - ROOF**

- 1) Check for warping, aging, moss, & cracking, making sure that shingles, shakes or tiles are sound; repair or replace as needed. Inspect the flashing around chimneys, skylights & vents.
- 2) Seal cracks or openings where water could penetrate. If you see significant damage or wear, consider contacting a roofing specialist to give you a bid on a roof replacement.

✓ FALL - SIDING

Inspect siding (especially on the south & storm sides of the house) for evidence of deterioration, including cracks, splintering, decay, & insect damage; clean, treat & repair as needed.

✓ FALL - EXTERIOR BRICK & STONE

Check joints between wood & masonry. Waterproof, repair or repaint bricks & Stone if necessary. If you're just getting home from work call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ FALL - EXTERIOR WOOD

Look for lifting or peeling paint, splitting wood or areas where the wood grain is separating ("checking"). This is evidence that water is getting into or behind the siding. Find out how the water is gaining access & fix it before winter arrives.

✓ FALL - STUCCO

- 1) A chalky residue that rubs off on your hand is evidence of oxidation, a deterioration of paint or color coat that reduces stucco's insulating value. If the stucco is cracked or has chips out of its surface, this allows water to get in & seep into walls & around windows & doors. Hire a professional to correct the problem.
- 2) Trim look for peeling paint on the fascia boards, windowsills & sashes that could allow water in to form mildew & fungus on the interior of your home behind curtains, blinds & window coverings.

✓ FALL - TRIM

Look for peeling paint & rot on the fascia boards, windowsills & sashes that could allow water in to form mildew & fungus on the interior of your home behind curtains, blinds & window coverings. Patch & paint it now. If you want to relax on your day off call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ SPRING - PIPES

- 1) Remove insulation around outdoor water pipes that had been winterized.
- 2) Check for leaking around the outside hose bibs & evidence of rust or white lime deposits that may indicate a leak is starting, & replace if necessary.

✓ SPRING - ROOF

- 1) Inspect roof surface for warping, aging, moss, & cracking, making sure that shingles, shakes or tiles are sound; repair or replace as needed.
- 2) Inspect the flashing around chimneys, skylights & vents. Seal cracks or openings where water could penetrate.

- 3) If you see significant damage or wear, contact a roofing specialist to give you a bid on a roof replacement. Check eaves, & soffit for signs of water damage, or deteriorating paint.
- 4) Repair, repaint or consider wrapping with maintenance-free vinyl or aluminum soffit & fascia.

✓ SPRING - SIDING

- 1) Inspect siding (especially on the south & storm sides of the house) for evidence of deterioration, including cracks, splintering, decay, & insect damage; clean, treat & repair as needed.
- 2) Remember, paint protects wood & stucco surfaces; postponing necessary painting will require more extensive & expensive preparation (scraping, sanding & priming) & repairs before repainting in the future.
- 3) Brick & Stone check joints between wood & masonry. Waterproof, repair or repaint if necessary. On wood; look for lifting or peeling paint, splitting wood or areas where the wood grain is separating or "checking" because water is getting into the siding. Hire a painting service if the damage is severe.

✓ SPRING - STUCCO

A chalky residue that rubs off on your hand is evidence of oxidation, a deterioration of paint or color coat that reduces stucco's insulating value. If the stucco is cracked, this allows water to get in around windows & doors. If this is the case, have your stucco professionally repaired. If you have better things to do call Handyman Central at 973-627-7398.

✓ SPRING - TRIM

Look for peeling paint on the fascia boards, windowsills & sashes that could allow water in to form mildew & fungus on the interior of your home behind curtains, blinds & window coverings. Consider installing maintenance free vinyl or aluminum trim.

✓ SPRING - SPRINKLERS

Check lawn sprinklers system for broken heads, leaky valves & exposed lines & contact a sprinklers service if necessary.

✓ SPRING - WATER WELL

Consider having well water tested for safety at least once a year.

