Home Repair Resource center

HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

SPRING INSPECTIONS

For winter damage

Each year when the weather gets warmer, savvy homeowners will make time to evaluate their home for any problems that occurred over the winter. It's important to look for problems that cold temperatures and heavy snow and ice may have caused to the systems of your house.

ROOF AND GUTTERS

1. **Roof.** The first place to start is the roof. Check for bent, cracked, or missing shingles, slates, or tiles. Look for damage to the metal flashing in roof valleys and around your chimney, soil stack, and other protrusions through the roof. These problems should be addressed by a roofer before water leaks through and rots out the framing underneath. Also, make sure the roofing material is still intact on any "flat" roofs atop porches or shed-type garages.
2. **Gutters.** Check your gutters, too. (Don’t forget the gutter on your garage.) Remove any accumulated debris, and make sure the gutters are still connected securely. Look for kinks, bows, or other damage to the gutters caused by ice build-up, and make sure they are pitched in a straight line in a slight downward slope to the downspout. Follow up by checking during a heavy rain that water is not leaking from or overflowing the gutters, and that there is no blockage or damage to the downspout and the crock or splash block that carries the water away.

TRIM, DOORS AND WINDOWS

3. **Wood trim.** Next, check the wood trim around doors, windows, porches and decks. Make sure the wood is sound and securely screwed or nailed in place, and replace any deteriorated caulking. Pay special attention to the drip caps (top trim) over windows and doors, where water intrusion can cause interior damage. Look at wooden railings, porches, and decks for signs of mold or rot. Make sure all steps are secure and level.
4. **Vinyl or metal trim.** If you have vinyl or metal trim around your windows and/or doors, inspect it to ensure the seams are tight and the materials aren’t damaged or bent. Straighten and re-caulk as needed.
5. **Weatherstripping.** Check the operation of any weatherstripping on doors and windows. If seasonal change has left gaps or has created friction, make any needed repairs or adjustments.

WALLS, VENTS AND LEAKS

6. **Siding and masonry.** Look at the siding, shingles, or masonry that clads your house. Secure any pieces that have come loose, and replace any that are damaged. Caulk spaces between wood pieces and replace deteriorated mortar between bricks so that water will not be able to penetrate through the joints.
7. **Vents.** Check all vents (from your furnace, fans, dryer, etc.) to ensure they are unobstructed.
8. **Signs of leaks.** Also, look for places where water may have been leaking into your home or garage: vertical cracks or areas showing evidence of localized humidity in the foundation, signs of water damage in your attic or crawl space, discoloration on the underside of your porch or garage roof, etc.

DRAINAGE AND GRADING

9. **Slabs and drains.** Check all concrete or asphalt slabs (such as driveway, sidewalks, and patios) to make sure they still slope away from the house. Fill any cracks and depressions. Clear any exterior drains in your yard or driveway to ensure they flow freely.

10. **Grading.** Make sure that your yard is graded so the soil slopes away from the walls of your house. Fill any low areas in the lawn or next to the foundation, to prevent water from pooling there during heavy rains.

WATER LINES, LIGHTS AND PAINT

11. **Water lines.** Check outdoor spigots and any water lines that run up exterior walls or through uninsulated spaces to make sure there is no damage from pipes that may have frozen over the winter.

12. **Exterior lights.** Check that exterior lights and bulbs operate as they should, and replace or repair as needed.

13. **Paint.** Finally, touch up any painted surfaces – walls, trim, doors, windows, porch floors, steps – as needed, to protect your house from the elements.

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Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

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