Home Repair Checklist

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Home Repair Checklist

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Home ownership is part of the American Dream.

Unfortunately, most of us don't realize the Dream costs more than its purchase price. We forget the continuous costs of maintenance and repair.

You can't ignore repair, and you will even want to improve the condition of your home, to increase its value when you sell. Timely maintenance is not repair; it is investment.

There are two ways to reduce the expensiveness of repair. One is to recognize and treat minor symptoms before you're forced into major surgery. Another is to do many of these repair jobs yourself.

This fact sheet is to help you decide what must be done, who will do it, and how it will be done.

Do not do repairs and maintenance piecemeal. Make a plan. The parts of a house depend on and affect each other. The following lists provide seasonal guidelines for checking the condition of your home. Draw up your own list, adding special features found in your own home.

The items marked with an asterisk (*) are not simple. You should consider getting help for them.

Check off as you go along. We started the lists out for you.

SPRING

List of items to check.

- Doors, windows, and trim for finish failures such as chipping and cracking.
- Windows for loose putty.
- Windows and screens for replacement, repair, and cleaning.
- Hardware (hinges, doorknobs, window mechanisms) to lubricate moving parts.
- Weatherstripping for tightness of fit.
- Caulking at doors, windows, and other openings and at joints between materials of different types (between wood and metal and/or masonry, for example).
- Exterior masonry for cracks and loose joints.
- Exterior painted surfaces for paint failure.
- Siding and trim for damage and decay.
- Exterior trim for tightness.
- Roof for damaged or loose shingles, blisters (air bubbles or pockets caused by heat distortion), damaged flashing.
- Underside of roof for water stains or dampness.
- Gutters, downspouts, hangers, and strainers for cleaning and repair.
- Vents and louvers for bird nests, etc.
- Fascias and soffits for paint failure and decay.
- Masonry or metal chimneys for obstructions and creosote buildup.*
- Interior painted and natural finished surfaces for dirt, finish failure.
- Joints in ceramic tile, laminated plastic, and similar surfaces. Check caulking around sinks, bathtubs, and showers.
- Lamp cords, extension cords, plugs. Replace at once if they show signs of wear and damage.
- Exposed electrical wiring. Replace at first sign of wear and damage.
- Furnaces to clean dirt and dust from condensing unit, air grilles, and ducts.
- Heating/cooling system, for checkup by qualified serviceman.*
- Window wells, area wells, and storm drains for cleaning.
- Driveways and walks for cracks and soil erosion.

FALL

List of items to check.

- Weatherstripping and caulking for damage and tightness of fit.
Exterior trim for tightness of fit.

Gutter strainers, gutters, and downspouts for cleaning.

Joints in ceramic tile, laminated plastic, and similar surfaces. Check caulking around sinks, bathtubs, and showers.

Lamp cords, extension cords, and plugs. Replace at first sign of wear and damage.

Exposed electrical wiring. Replace at first sign of wear and damage.

Heating/cooling system, for checkup by qualified serviceman.*

Furnace, to clean dirt and dust from condensing unit, air grilles, and ducts.

Window air conditioners. Remove for winter.

Area wells, window wells, storm drains for cleaning.

Outside water lines and hoses. Drain and store.

List of items to check.

Masonry or metal chimneys for obstructions and creosote buildup.*

Roof for replacement estimate.*

If fuses blow or breakers tip frequently, electrician should be contacted to determine cause and make necessary repairs.

If you get a slight, tingling shock from handling or touching any appliance, disconnect and repair.

Clean or change filter on furnace and on air conditioning units.

Faucets, hose bibbs, and valves in the plumbing system for leakage.

Clean area wells, window wells and storm drains.

Clean and repair out-of-season equipment.

List of items to check.

Foundation and basement for signs of termite infestation.

Grading around home. Water must drain away.

Basement for dampness and/or leakage following wet weather.

Gutters, downspouts, and other sheet metal for repainting.

Antenna guy wires and support.

Floors for excessive wear. Check particularly where one floor material joins another.

Humidifier and/or dehumidifier for cleaning and servicing.

Septic tank for buildup of scum and sludge.*

Water heater for heating efficiency.*

Outbuildings and fences for decay and termite damage.

A N N U A L L Y

List of items to check.

First off, don't underestimate yourself. You can do many of these jobs, as well as any paid professional.

Many things enter into your decisions about whether or not you do any of these jobs yourself.

Before you begin any maintenance or repair job, check out the following.

1. Statements in the warranty accompanying your equipment, appliances, and products. You may not have warranty coverage if you do your own work. Remember that some houses now have a warranty period.

2. Conditions stated in your service contract. You may have access to professional help for maintenance and repair.

3. Local codes and regulations. They may require that work be done by a licensed craftsman, particularly if the work is on electrical wiring, plumbing, or other items related to health, safety, and general well-being of the family and community.
4. Statements in your **lease or contract**. It may designate who is responsible for maintenance and repair work in rented or multi-family dwellings. And it may impose other limitations on work done by tenants or residents.

Then consider yourself.

1. **Your resources** of energy, time, and money.

   Does the job require immediate attention?

   Is it one that must be taken care of regularly?

   Would buying a replacement be cheaper than repairing?

   Do you have the necessary tools and supplies on hand? Can you rent them, or improvise them? Can you afford to buy them? Would a tool for a one-time repair cost more than hiring the task done?

2. **Your interest and experience**.

   Do you have the knowledge and skill necessary to do the job?

   Do you enjoy doing the work?

   Is the job difficult or dangerous to do? Will you need help? Can you handle tools and supplies properly, according to directions and safety precautions?

3. **The comparative cost** of doing the job yourself or of hiring a professional.

   Is prompt, satisfactory local service available? Is emergency service available? Does the job require immediate attention?

**BEFORE YOU CALL A SERVICEMAN**

Keep a record of odd jobs which must be done. Then, when you do call a serviceman for a specific job, you can have him take care of other small jobs at the same time. The total cost of a service call usually consists of the basic service call charge plus the hourly wage of the serviceman plus the cost of any parts or supplies used in making the repairs.

If you have a service contract or warranty, it will state which portion of the charges are covered under the contract and which portion you will have to assume.

**KEEP A RECORD OF MAINTENANCE**

Recording what you have had done and when it was done is essential. Include the type and cost of materials used. If you used a professional for part or all of the work, keep the name and telephone number for easier reference in the future. Keep all contracts and warranties to add to your records.