

HELPFUL ADVICE & HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS

We offer the following tips based on my own years of home repair experience, as a courtesy to you, in hopes that your home will last for generations to come. Following these simple recommendations should prevent thousands of dollars in repairs over the life of the home. Thank you for placing your trust in us. We wish you good health and much happiness in your new home.

EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE:

- Ensure that threshold/door jamb miter joints, as well as all door and window trim, are properly caulked and painted to prevent moisture from "wicking" into the trim, resulting in eventual rot.
- Keep the bottom edges of wood corner boards sealed with caulk and/or painted and several inches from ground.
- Ensure that all doors and windows are caulked around their perimeter where trim meets brick or siding to prevent moisture intrusion and heat loss. Use a high-quality caulk and take your time so the job is neat and attractive.
- Regarding caulk guns: We recommend investing in a "dripless" caulk gun, which is easier and cleaner to use than a traditional type caulk gun. These material -and nerve saving- devices can be purchased at Lowe's or Home Depot.
- If your windows and doors don't have a piece of metal bent 90 degrees, installed to sit on top of the headcasing and run up behind siding, keep a thick bead of caulk maintained above the window/door where the trim meets the siding. This will prevent moisture intrusion behind the wall as well as rot to the window and/or doors.
- Keep all siding 6-8 inches above grade to prevent rot and/or insect infestation. Consider replacing any composite wood or masonite siding that is in close proximity to ground with a cement composite siding like *Hardiplank*, which is rot and insect resistant.
- Keep all shrubs and trees pruned at least 18 inches from the house as well as away from the roof. This will protect the foundation, siding, and shingles from damage.
- If your home has composite wood or hardboard siding (LP or Masonite), it is important to keep it well-painted and caulked. Be sure to fill any recessed nail heads and paint the bottom edge of the siding where it has a tendency to absorb moisture. Semi-gloss 100% acrylic latex paint should be the paint of choice.
- The typical fiberglass shingle roof will last 15-20 years, but the rubber boots on plumbing flashings may wear out in less time; Therefore, it is a good idea to inspect these components after the roof's 10th birthday and annually thereafter, to determine the condition or need for replacement of same.
- Check the Basement and Crawlspace periodically to ensure that water is not infiltrating through the foundation, or that the plumbing system has not developed a leak.
- Install a vapor barrier (6 mil plastic laid on the ground) in the crawlspace to prevent moisture vapor from collecting on the floor framing and insulation. A crawlspace drain is also recommended under all crawl spaces.
- Keep gutters clean and functional to help prevent water from backing up and damaging the trim and soffit.
- Keep area around structure graded so water flows away from, not towards the foundation.
- If you have a septic system, have it pumped and inspected every 5-7 years to help prolong the life of septic system.
- Check exterior and interior GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets annually to ensure they are operational.

INTERIOR MAINTENANCE:

- Change the filter(s) in the air handling system at least every 3 months and more often if you have pets. This will help to keep your system operating efficiently and will prolong the system's life.
- Replace the batteries in smoke detectors annually and test the units periodically. If you have gas appliances, have at least one carbon monoxide detector installed for safety.
- Periodically check all sink P-traps and supply lines under sinks to ensure they are not leaking.
- Keep tub and shower areas well-caulked and/or grouted to prevent moisture intrusion from occurring.
- Fix squeaky floors by inserting a small wooden shim or wedge between the floor joist and subfloor (plywood) under the squeaking area (Two people, one in the house and the other in the crawlspace or basement, make this task easier).
- Clean disposal blades by inserting a few ice cubes with a slice of lemon and running for a few seconds (with water).
- Keep fan blades and motor housing dusted often to prolong the life of the ceiling fan.
- Make sure your heating and air technician blows condensate line(s) clear during your annual maintenance checkup.
- If your door scrubs at the upper part of door, try replacing one of the short hinge screws with a longer one run into jamb.
- Prevent damage below windows from leaking windows by keeping miter joint behind the tracks sealed and caulked. This is the joint where the jamb and sill meet. First, seal with latex primer, then lay a thick bead of caulk in joint and caulk of vertical joint of track as well.