

Home Maintenance 101

Don't Let 'Home Sweet Home' Turn Sour

Proper care of your home need not be a burden. Telemark Service & Maintenance wants you to know how you can begin establishing the habits now that will yield positive long-term results. Take inventory of your household systems and appliances and you'll win. In fact, here are some preventative maintenance tips you can practice in order to continue nurturing your growing financial investment. Do this and you'll achieve enormous gains on your home maintenance.

The importance of preventative home maintenance. Why is it needed?

- It is sometimes required by the lender agreement.
- Your home is one of your greatest assets and best investments
- Your appliances will last longer with regular care.
- Property value: A carefully preserved property brings a higher price.
- The more TLC put into it, the quicker it will sell.
- It is simply a more comfortable living environment.
- An ounce of household prevention will help eliminate catastrophic expenses later.

Keeping the financial stakes low

Housing specialists recommend delegating 1% – 3 % of your home's market value annually to pay for household maintenance and improvement costs. You can do this when you create a monthly budgeting category for your home's repair needs and dedicate a certain percentage of your income toward it. During the months where no cash is needed for repair, deposit the funds into a savings account in anticipation of future need – especially as your house gets older. This is no substitution for a home maintenance plan, but it's a good way to increasing financial awareness. Home maintenance plans, remember, are always a good investment.

Plumbing

- Perform an inventory on all units in the bathroom and kitchen. Are sinks, showers and tubs properly draining? Remove any debris buildup you can on your own, using Plumbers Helper type products.
- Check faucet and hose connections below all sinks and toilets.
- Fit tubs and showers with strainers to catch excess debris.
- Look for leaking valves at all shut-off points.
- Pull back floor space to further inspect for leaks and other damage around water supply pipes and all connected drainage systems.

- A plastic bag full of vinegar wrapped around the shower head will remove mineral deposits and unclog plugged-up shower heads. Soak them overnight and in the morning, scrub the loosened residue off with a toothbrush.
- Take inventory of the water heater, paying close attention to the pressure relief valve.
- Never flush bulky tissue, sanitary napkins or cigarette butts down your toilet.

Electric

- Examine the condition of all cords on all appliances and electronic devices.
- Never handle live electrical wires. Shut off the disconnect device.
- Thoroughly inspect all levels of the home for exposed wires. Replace those with cracked insulation or those in bad shape.
- Identify and label all circuits in the service box so it is clear which appliances and outlets are in each.

Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning

- Sweep out dust, dander, dirt, lint and soot from ducts, chimneys, valves, air grills and furnaces.
- If possible, have all ducts sealed for both heating and cooling systems. What results will be much more efficient use of air flow and total savings of up to 15 %-20% improvement in air passage.
- Periodically check and replace filters. When dirty, clean them.
- Do not block warm air registers. Keep them free of carpeting, curtains and furniture.
- Check the valves in the attic for impediments that might obstruct air flow. If you can see clear through to the outside world, your valves are fine.
- Maintain consistent water levels and practice regular sediment removal when using a steam heat system.

Kitchen

- Always keep sinks clean and clear of waste. Break solids into the smallest pieces whenever possible, when using the garbage disposal. Always run water for proper movement down drain.
- Never pour grease down sink drains.
- Clean garbage disposal with grated ice and lemon or orange rinds.
- Clean fan and coils under your refrigerator at least once a year.

- Clean interior, gaskets and exterior of refrigerator often. For odors, store an opened box of baking soda on the bottom shelf.
- Oven/range control panel should be cleaned regularly, but never spray cleanser on it directly. Partly-saturate a rag and wipe down the console.
- Wipe down glass and ceramic tops with cleansers created specifically for them.
- With self-cleaning ovens, never spray chemical cleansers into them prior to cleaning, as they work by scorching the interior of the oven to a temperature so hot the buildup is incinerated.

Laundry

- Check water hoses attached to your washing machine for wear and tear. Replace those that show signs of deterioration or rupture.
- Make sure your washing machine is level to avoid motion brought about by vibrations that could damage surrounding areas. Adjust the legs in the front and make sure it is close to the ground.
- Most people don't realize that many washing machines have lint filters. You will find yours in the center tube of the agitator. Lift it out and empty it periodically. Other washers have lint tubes near the top of the machine that can be pulled out and wiped off.
- Clean out your dryer annually. Some lint accumulation may occur outside the filter and in the dryer's cabinet.
- Clean areas surrounding the lint filter - the chutes and ducts.

Office

- Be sure to make it a habit of backing up computer software data.
- Keep all electronic equipment consistently cleaned with cleansers that dry on contact.
- Compressed air is recommended for ridding electronic equipment of dust mites.