Spring Maintenance – Windows and Doors Check

[Intro Music]

(Host) Spring Fun! My next topic will focus on the windows and doors outside. I'll begin by describing why the windows and doors should be inspected, then what to look for and do. Hello and welcome to EBC Home Hints, the podcast dedicated to making your home a safer place, one episode at a time. I'm your host, Paul Rochette, and today we're diving into the world of doing a visual inspection of your windows and doors.

(Host) Anything that breaks the seal of a home, are areas like windows and doors. What the heck do I mean? If a perfect home could be built, we would have no openings. Meaning anything that cuts into the home to install a product can be affected by the weather and can cause leaks. If you don't maintain your windows and doors, I guarantee you will have damage eventually. Let me tell you about an issue my wife and I had. A new home with a slightly inset front door with side lights. The home was two stories with no overhang in the front. The homes exposure was facing directly into the winds path. After a year, we had to replace the door. We started to notice the trim around the door was rotting. I opened the inside wall, by the door and found termites and water damage. What was happening is water seeped in encouraging termites to make a home. The termites were eradicated and wall repaired. This time we had a well-known windows and door company install a new door. Guarded with a lifetime warranty, within seven months, we had found more damage by the door sill. All this time, everything was properly caulked and sealed, we thought. The company came out; after investigating, we all concluded it was the design of the home. That was hard to take. So not everything can be fixed with caulk and sealer.

(Host) Putting this into perspective. Remember a window and door is basically a poorly insulated opening into your home. So many factors go into selecting correct windows for your climate, I cannot cover that in this episode. A simple illustration is to provide a typical average that walls are insulated versus windows and doors. Please note, other variables play into this like keeping heat out and cool in etc. As an example, single pane window where there is no gap between, provides an R-1 insulation value, the lowest other than zero. Basic no coating dual pane, window is approximately R-2.083. Some of the best windows, a three pane two sun stop coatings and argon between the panes is only R-8.065. A typical

wall, with 2x4 construction, has a R-13 to R-15 value. Doors without sidelights a typical R value is R-5 to R6. The lesson is we lose a lot of heat and air in these locations.

(Host) When walking around the home, you're looking for more than **(breaking glass effect)** broken panes, damaged wood, ripped screens, peeling paint and caulking. The goal of an inspection is to find air gaps, damage, split wood, peeling caulk, damaged or poor weather stripping, even windows painted shut, or that do not open. You will see a variety of window types, some are not meant to open, crank out, slide up etc. When inspecting a window, start in one spot around the outside surrounding portion. If your windows are made of wood, use your hand, if you need to. Work around the trim, looking and feeling for wet or damp areas. Look for spots with discolored paint. It can be a sign of moisture behind the paint. Take a small screwdriver and gently press into the wood. If the screwdriver easily goes into the wood, it probably is rotted. Unless you're a gorilla and pressed too hard. **(Gorilla Sound)**. Inspect the caulk, for cracks and weathering. If separated from the siding or window frame, remove the old caulk and re do. Recommend appropriate silicon for windows and doors outside. Anything that is elastic and appropriate for your climate. Make sure the wood trim is either painted or stained. This acts as a protection from weather and ultraviolet rays. Look at the wood where it meets the glass. Normally this has a gasket of sorts, but not always. I would recommend a thin strip of caulk here as well. Before that, look at your window type and check the manufacturer for recommendations. Normally the name is etched into the glass, in the corner. Replace any broken glass and screening. Everything is a system, in whole, that protects the home. Inside the home, open the windows. Inspect any rubber gaskets or felt stripping on the window unit. Most windows have something on the sides and bottom, to prevent bugs and air leakage. If you don't see any, the windows either lose them over time, or never had them. Do you feel air around the windows? I would recommend a window expert, to inspect it if you find issues. Check the locking mechanism and make sure it is functional. Windows should never be painted shut, unless they do not open. Do the windows open and close properly? Every window should, as these can become emergency exits and need to be opened even by children.

(Host) The doors will receive the same inspection as the windows. Perform all the trim, rot and caulk checks like you did for the windows. A particular area to look at is the outside bottom trim molding. At the bottom just above the sill to the left and right side, is where we normally see damage. Perhaps it will be sunken in, wavy like its rotting from behind. All doors seem to have this issue and can be corrected, if caught early enough. Look under the door sill. Can you see beneath it? If yes, this should be sealed as well. **Special note:** I did not mention this above, but never caulk, seal, or paint over damp areas. This will make the situation worse. From inside, look to see if you can see daylight around the door. Check the door seals around the top and sides. If intact, perhaps the door has warped, or the trim has

expanded, or contracted. Either way I would recommend a specialist look at it, if it is considerable. Does the door latch and lock properly, sitting into the door plates on the side when closed? If not, this should be corrected. Now look under the door. Normally the outside doors have a weather strip or door sweep under it. This keeps the elements out. If you can see under the door, the door sweep should be replaced. I did not specifically go over sliding doors, or metal windows. The principles are all the same. These should all be inspected as well. I hope this information has helped you inspect your own home during the spring.

[Closing Music]

1. **(Encourage Listeners)**

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