



# HOME MAINTENANCE HANDBOOK

  
*Your Guide to Protecting  
Your Home Year-Round*

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## Why Home Maintenance Matters

A home is made up of many systems that work together. Like a vehicle, regular maintenance helps prevent breakdowns and expensive repairs.

Ignoring small problems can quickly lead to:

- Water damage
- Mold growth
- Roof leaks
- Structural deterioration
- Electrical hazards
- Reduced HVAC performance

Routine inspections and preventative maintenance are always less expensive than emergency repairs.

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## Home Maintenance Checklist

### Interior

- Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors
- Replace HVAC air filters if needed
- Check sinks and plumbing fixtures for leaks
- Inspect ceilings for water stains
- Clean kitchen exhaust filters
- Test GFCI outlets
- Check toilets for leaks or running water
- Inspect attic access areas for moisture or pests

### Exterior

- Walk around the home and inspect for damage
  - Check irrigation systems for leaks or overspray
  - Inspect exterior lighting
  - Remove debris from around HVAC equipment
  - Check for standing water near the foundation
  - Inspect fences and gates
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# Seasonal Maintenance Guide

## Spring Maintenance

- Inspect roof for missing or damaged shingles
- Clean gutters and downspouts
- Service HVAC system before summer
- Inspect windows and doors for damaged seals
- Check exterior paint and caulking
- Trim trees away from the roof
- Inspect sprinklers and drainage systems

## Summer Maintenance

- Monitor air conditioning performance
- Inspect attic ventilation
- Check pool equipment and safety barriers
- Pressure wash exterior surfaces if needed
- Inspect for signs of termites or pests
- Test exterior hose bibs and irrigation

## Fall Maintenance

- Clean gutters and roof drains
- Inspect weather stripping around doors and windows
- Flush water heater if recommended
- Trim landscaping before storm season
- Inspect attic insulation
- Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

## Winter Maintenance

- Inspect roof and flashing after storms
  - Check for drafts around windows and doors
  - Test garage door auto-reverse safety features
  - Inspect electrical panels for corrosion or moisture
  - Monitor plumbing for leaks
  - Clean dryer vents
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# HVAC System Maintenance

## Air Conditioning Tips

In South Florida, your air conditioning system works harder than almost any other appliance in your home.

### Recommended Maintenance

- Replace filters every 1–3 months
- Keep outdoor condenser units free of debris
- Have the system professionally serviced annually
- Keep supply and return vents unobstructed
- Monitor for unusual sounds or odors

### Signs Your HVAC System Needs Service

- Weak airflow
  - Uneven cooling
  - Water leaks
  - High electric bills
  - Musty odors
  - Frequent cycling
- 

# Plumbing Maintenance

## Preventing Water Damage

Water damage is one of the most common and expensive home repair issues.

### Plumbing Tips

- Do not ignore small leaks
- Know where your main water shutoff valve is located
- Avoid flushing wipes or grease
- Inspect under sinks regularly
- Monitor water heater performance
- Replace worn caulking around tubs and showers

### Signs of Plumbing Problems

- Low water pressure
- Slow drains
- Mold or mildew odors

- Water stains
  - High water bills
  - Running toilets
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## Electrical Safety

### Important Electrical Tips

- Test GFCI outlets monthly
- Do not overload outlets or extension cords
- Replace damaged cords immediately
- Keep electrical panels accessible
- Hire qualified electricians for repairs

### Warning Signs of Electrical Issues

- Flickering lights
  - Warm outlets
  - Burning smells
  - Frequently tripped breakers
  - Buzzing sounds
  - Discolored switches or outlets
- 

## Roof Maintenance

### Protecting Your Roof

Your roof is your home's first line of defense against weather and moisture intrusion.

### Roof Maintenance Tips

- Inspect roof annually
- Keep gutters clean
- Trim overhanging branches
- Check flashing around penetrations
- Address leaks immediately

### Signs of Roof Problems

- Missing shingles or tiles
- Ceiling stains
- Mold growth in attic

- Sagging areas
  - Loose flashing
  - Granule loss
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## Moisture & Mold Prevention

### Preventing Mold Growth

South Florida's humidity can create ideal conditions for mold growth.

#### Prevention Tips

- Maintain indoor humidity below 60%
- Repair leaks quickly
- Use exhaust fans in bathrooms
- Keep HVAC systems maintained
- Ensure proper drainage around the home
- Monitor attic and crawlspace moisture

### Common Signs of Mold

- Musty odors
  - Visible staining
  - Allergy symptoms
  - Water damage
  - Condensation issues
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## Hurricane Preparedness

### Preparing Your Home for Storm Season

#### Before a Storm

- Inspect roof and gutters
- Secure loose outdoor items
- Test generators if applicable
- Verify shutters are functional
- Trim trees and branches
- Review insurance documents

#### Emergency Supplies

- Flashlights

- Batteries
  - First aid kit
  - Bottled water
  - Non-perishable food
  - Portable chargers
  - Important documents
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## Pool & Spa Maintenance

### Pool Safety Tips

- Maintain proper chemical levels
- Inspect pool barriers and gates
- Keep drains and covers secured
- Supervise children around water
- Maintain pool equipment regularly

### Common Pool Issues

- Leaks
  - Cracked decking
  - Faulty bonding
  - Broken safety barriers
  - Pump or filter problems
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## Energy Efficiency Tips

### Lowering Utility Costs

#### Simple Energy Saving Tips

- Use programmable thermostats
  - Replace air filters regularly
  - Seal air leaks around doors and windows
  - Upgrade to LED lighting
  - Maintain attic insulation
  - Service HVAC systems annually
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## Pest Prevention

### Protecting Your Home from Pests Prevention Tips

- Seal cracks and openings
  - Keep landscaping trimmed
  - Eliminate standing water
  - Store food properly
  - Inspect attic and crawlspaces
  - Schedule regular pest control treatments if needed
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## Fire Safety

### Home Fire Prevention

- Test smoke alarms monthly
  - Keep fire extinguishers accessible
  - Never leave cooking unattended
  - Clean dryer vents regularly
  - Inspect electrical cords
  - Create a family escape plan
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## Garage & Garage Door Safety

### Garage Door Maintenance

- Test auto-reverse safety feature monthly
  - Lubricate moving components
  - Inspect springs and cables
  - Keep tracks clean
  - Never attempt spring repairs yourself
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## Appliance Maintenance

### Refrigerator

- Clean condenser coils
- Check door seals

- Monitor temperatures

## Dishwasher

- Clean filters regularly
- Inspect supply lines
- Check for leaks

## Dryer

- Clean lint trap after every use
- Inspect and clean dryer vent annually

## Water Heater

- Inspect for leaks or corrosion
  - Flush tank if recommended
  - Monitor age and performance
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# Homeowner Maintenance Calendar

Month	Recommended Tasks
January	Test smoke detectors, inspect roof
February	Check plumbing fixtures, clean filters
March	Service HVAC system
April	Clean gutters, inspect exterior
May	Check irrigation and drainage
June	Inspect attic and ventilation
July	Monitor HVAC performance
August	Inspect for leaks and mold
September	Prepare for storm season
October	Inspect roof and flashing
November	Clean dryer vents and gutters
December	Review home safety systems

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### How often should I replace HVAC filters?

Most filters should be replaced every 1–3 months depending on usage, pets, allergies, and filter type.

### How often should I have my roof inspected?

A roof should typically be inspected annually and after major storms.

### What is a GFCI outlet?

A Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlet is designed to help protect against electric shock in wet areas.

### When should I schedule a home inspection?

Home inspections are recommended during:

- Real estate transactions
- Annual maintenance evaluations
- Before hurricane season
- Before insurance renewals
- At the 11-month warranty mark for new homes

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## Maintenance Record Log

### HVAC Service

Date	Company	Notes
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### Roof Repairs

Date	Contractor	Notes
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## Plumbing Repairs

Date	Contractor	Notes
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## Appliance Replacement Log

Appliance	Install Date	Notes
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## South Florida Homeowner Tips

### Living in South Florida Comes with Unique Home Maintenance Challenges

South Florida homes experience intense heat, humidity, heavy rain, salt air exposure, tropical storms, and year-round HVAC usage. Proper maintenance is critical for protecting your property.

### Important South Florida Maintenance Tips

#### Control Indoor Humidity

- Keep indoor humidity between 45%–60%
- Use exhaust fans during showers and cooking
- Service HVAC systems regularly
- Consider a whole-home dehumidifier if needed

#### Protect Against Water Intrusion

- Inspect roofs after storms
- Check exterior caulking annually
- Keep gutters and drainage systems clear
- Monitor windows and doors for moisture intrusion

#### Prevent Mold Growth

- Repair leaks immediately
- Keep condensate drain lines clear

- Inspect attics regularly
- Monitor areas behind furniture and under sinks

## Salt Air Protection

Homes near the coast may experience accelerated corrosion.

- Rinse exterior HVAC units periodically
  - Inspect exterior fasteners and fixtures
  - Maintain exterior paint and sealants
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# What To Do After Closing on a Home

## First Week Checklist

- Locate water shutoff valve
- Locate electrical panel
- Test smoke detectors
- Change locks if desired
- Review inspection report carefully
- Create a home maintenance folder
- Schedule HVAC servicing if needed

## First 30 Days

- Replace HVAC filters
- Inspect attic and insulation
- Check irrigation systems
- Clean dryer vent
- Walk roof perimeter after heavy rain
- Verify gutters drain properly

## First 90 Days

- Schedule preventative maintenance
  - Address any deferred repairs
  - Establish pest control if needed
  - Inspect plumbing fixtures for leaks
  - Monitor utility usage
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# Hurricane Preparedness Checklist

## Hurricane Season Preparation

### Exterior Preparation

- Inspect roof and flashing
- Trim tree branches
- Secure loose outdoor items

Test shutters and impact protection  Clean gutters and drains  Check exterior caulking

### Interior Preparation

- Test smoke detectors
- Charge backup batteries
- Store important documents safely
- Prepare emergency supplies
- Test flashlights and generators

### Emergency Supplies

- Bottled water
- Non-perishable food
- First aid kit
- Medications
- chargers
- Battery-powered radio
- Flashlights and batteries

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## Florida HVAC & Humidity Maintenance Schedule

### Monthly

- Replace or inspect HVAC filter
- Check condensate drain line
- Monitor indoor humidity levels
- Inspect vents and returns

### Every 3–6 Months

- Flush condensate drain line
- Inspect insulation around ducts
- Clean supply vents
- Inspect outdoor condenser area

### Annually

- Professional HVAC servicing
- Coil cleaning if needed
- Refrigerant evaluation
- Electrical component inspection
- Drain line cleaning

## Signs of Excess Indoor Humidity

- Musty odors
  - Condensation on windows
  - Mold or mildew growth
  - Sticky indoor air
  - Increased allergy symptoms
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## When To Call a Professional

### Contact a Qualified Professional If You Notice: Roofing Issues

- Active roof leaks
- Missing shingles or tiles
- Sagging roof areas
- Water stains on ceilings

### Electrical Problems

- Burningsmells
- Frequently tripped breakers
- Flickering lights
- Warm outlets

### Plumbing Problems

- Persistent leaks
- Sewer odors
- Low water pressure
- Water stains or mold growth

### HVAC Concerns

- Weak airflow
- Water leaks
- Musty odors
- High utility bills
- Uneven cooling

### Structural Concerns

- Large wall cracks
- Uneven floors
- Sticking doors/windows

- Foundation movement
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## Appliance & System Life Expectancy Guide

System	Average Lifespan
Air Conditioner	10–15 Years
Water Heater	8–12 Years
Roof (Shingle)	15–25 Years
Refrigerator	10–15 Years
Dishwasher	8–12 Years
Garage Door Opener	10–15 Years
Smoke Detectors	Replace Every 10 Years
Dryer	10–13 Years

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## Questions to Ask Contractors

Before hiring contractors or repair professionals, consider asking:

- Are you licensed and insured?
  - Can you provide references?
  - Do you offer warranties?
  - Will permits be required?
  - What is included in the estimate?
  - How long will the project take?
  - Are there additional potential costs?
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## Emergency Shutoff Locations

Every homeowner should know the location of:

- Main water shutoff valve
- Electrical main disconnect
- Gas shutoff valve (if applicable)
- HVAC emergency disconnects

Consider labeling these areas clearly for emergencies.

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# Home Maintenance Budget Planning

## Annual Maintenance Budget Tips

Experts often recommend budgeting approximately 1%–3% of your home's value annually for maintenance and repairs.

## Common Maintenance Expenses

- HVAC servicing
- Roof maintenance
- Plumbing repairs
- Exterior painting
- Pest control
- Appliance replacement
- Landscaping and drainage

Preventative maintenance can help reduce emergency repair costs over time.

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## Final Thoughts

Homeownership comes with responsibility, but regular maintenance can help reduce stress, protect your investment, and improve the overall safety and performance of your home.

Mike's Home Inspections is committed to helping homeowners make informed decisions through professional inspections, education, and trusted guidance.

Thank you for choosing Mike's Home Inspections.

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## Contact Information

### Mike's Home Inspections

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