



THE HOMETEAM
INSPECTION SERVICE, INC.

Spring Tune-up Guide

Every now and then we take cars in for an oil change, have the tires rotated, the brakes checked or maybe a general tune-up. Our homes are machines too, shelter machines. They deserve and will benefit from periodic service as much as our hard-working cars. Our shelter machine is more complex than most of us realize. We tend to look at homes from a viewpoint of aesthetic or social considerations. Beneath the painted and ornamented surface, are hard working systems willing to work for years, harnessed and regimented, without complaint? But there always comes a day where these loyal friends need our help. Let's see how we can look into their needs now, and on a semi-annual basis, so the possible crisis may be headed off. Let there be harmony and good cheer in our homes!

SITE

- Wait till after the last frost to set out seedlings.
- Prune away any winter-kill; remove plantings if they have died.
- Tune-up the lawn mower.
- Fill in any site erosion and re-seed.
- Be sure all surface water drains away from your house.
- Check the health of your big trees, if there is any dying or diseased, have them removed now. It will be dangerous to go up onto a thoroughly dead tree and you may not find anyone willing to do it. The time to do it is when their branches can still be relied on to support a man.
- Trim back unruly landscaping.
- Check your mailbox, fencing, walkways, patios, arbors, etc. for needed maintenance.
- Does your deck need to be cleaned and sealed? Are the handrails sound?
- Have your asphalt driveway sealed.
- Replace worn or missing fibrous expansion strips between your concrete driveway and garage floor.
- Is it time to re-surface your concrete driveway or walkway? Winter freeze-thaw cycles may have left these surfaces pitted, chipped or cracked.

FOUNDATION

- Check that crawlspace, what's going on under there?
- Do you have standing water?
- Mold or fungus? Put a vapor barrier down if does not already have one and use a mildewcide/fungicide now. Be sure your crawlspace is getting fresh air.
- Have any critters taken up residence?
- Identify any basement leaks.

We encourage you to care for your home and respect the initiative of do-it-yourselfers. We do not advocate that maintenance be performed by anyone who is not capable and comfortable doing so. If you are unsure of your ability to perform needed maintenance on your home, seek the services of professionals.

- Do your basement walls have any cracks that need sealing? If any cracks are 3/16" or wider, or if you have any long horizontal cracks, better consult an expert now.
- Is your basement or crawlspace insulated?

FRAMING/EXTERIOR

- Look for signs of insect activity, especially in crawlspace framing and around the floor-framing perimeter.
- Look for cracked joists or rafters.
- Look for sagging headers or tilting walls; then get expert advice.
- Is your brickwork in need of mortar repointing? Are there damaged bricks that need to be replaced?
- How long has it been since your brick work was water sealed? Resealing is usually done every 5 to 8 years.
- Does your siding or trim need repainting? It is easier to do it regularly than have to replace rotted or damaged sections later, when you finally get around to it, or to discover that the continued water entry has begun to rot the underlying framing.
- Secure any loose sections of vinyl or aluminum siding; replace damaged sections.
- Replace cracked or broken windows.
- Upgrade to modern low-E insulated windows.
- Put in your storm windows before cold weather.
- Caulk around windows, doors, utility line entrances, and vents.
- Look into the possibility of retrofitting insulation into sidewalls of your wonderful old house.
- Add insulation to floor of your unfinished attic.
- Repair damaged stucco.

ROOF

- Clean gutters and downspouts.
- Be sure gutters and downspouts are securely attached.
- The weight of winter ice often pulls gutters and downspouts loose.
- Be sure the roof is water tight-are shingles missing or cracked?
- Is any flashing rusted through?
- Check under the roof; are there any signs of leaking there?
- Look at your chimney or flu stack; any visible damage?
- Are any trees rubbing against your roof?
- Be sure your bath vents, kitchen vents and dryer vents go all the way outside, not just into your attic. The bath vents should be insulated to prevent condensation in cold weather.

ELECTRICAL

- Check your outdoor receptacles to make sure they are water tight; if you have painted over them the gaskets will be stiff and cannot be counted on to be watertight.
- Put bulbs in any open outdoor light sockets; replace burned-out bulbs. Check to see that they have a weather-protective globe or surround if that is their design.
- Take those pennies out from behind your fuses!
- It's time for a wiring upgrade.

We encourage you to care for your home and respect the initiative of do-it-yourselfers. We do not advocate that maintenance be performed by anyone who is not capable and comfortable doing so. If you are unsure of your ability to perform needed maintenance on your home, seek the services of professionals.

- If you are constantly blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers, or your lights occasionally flicker or dim, have your system checked by a licensed electrician.
- Install GFCI receptacles by your sinks and lavatories, and in the garage and at outdoor receptacles. Inexpensive and relatively easy, it can be done even on older underground two-wire systems. Have an electrician do it if you are unsure how. You deserve this modern protection

PLUMBING

- Check your garden hose and repair leaks, damaged connectors and replace old rubber gaskets.
- Insulate your water supply lines-hot and cold; cold lines may sweat profusely in summer.
- Test your water supply, not just for well owners; municipal supplies may be compromised too. An annual test is smart.
- Have your septic tank system inspected and pumped out, if you have one. Depending on your tanks' size, field system and use, the tank may need to be pumped every 1 to 5 years.
- Have those slow drip leaks fixed.
- Insulate your water heater.
- If your water heater does not have a temperature and pressure release valve, or a pipe running from this valve to near the floor, have one installed now, don't risk scalding or catastrophic tank rupture.
- Fix any leaky valves and tighten any loose fixture attachments. If you smell sewer gas around your drains, tighten those loose seals or consult a plumber to find the cause.
- Be sure your sump pumps works. A battery backup will run the pump even if a torrential storm knocks out the power.

HVAC

- Uncover your air conditioner after the daytime temps are steadily in the 60's, and then switch on the circuit breaker to the A/C.
- Have a heating contractor inspect and ready your cooling system for the coming season. Be sure the system is fully charged with refrigerant. Straighten bent cooling fins. Follow the manufactures guidelines for filter maintenance.
- Be sure all ductwork seams are tightly sealed with foil tape.
- Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors; be sure batteries are good in those you may already have.
- Be sure your flues are clean before every heating season (furnaces, water heaters and fireplace).

Compliments of The HomeTeam Inspection Service

Copyright 2003 The HomeTeam Inspection Service, Inc.
www.hmteam.com

We encourage you to care for your home and respect the initiative of do-it-yourselfers. We do not advocate that maintenance be performed by anyone who is not capable and comfortable doing so. If you are unsure of your ability to perform needed maintenance on your home, seek the services of professionals.