



Home Tips



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • MARCH 2015 •

Q & A

Maintaining Your Home

Years ago you gave us a list of things to look at to properly maintain our home. We cannot find the list and would like to know if you could reprint it?

Proper maintenance is very important in order to protect your investment. We too often see homes deteriorating because of the lack of maintenance. Small maintenance items can turn into very large repair bills. We recommend inspecting your house in the spring. The following list should give you an idea of what to inspect. Each house is different, so add to this list as needed.

ROOFING

- Clean all pine straw off of the roof shingles.
- Look for broken and missing shingles. If shingles are cracking or delaminating, replacement may be needed. Roof shingles normally last approximately 15 years.
- Check shingles for nail holes. Seal any hole found with a sealant designed for roof shingles.
- Check for tree limbs rubbing against the shingles. Remove any limb within 6 feet of the roof.
- Make sure roof shingles extend all the way into the gutters and water is not running behind the gutters onto the fascia boards.
- Check all vents, flue pipes, skylights and chimney flashings for possible deterioration. Look on the inside of the attic on the rook decking for signs of water stains.
- Check for loose gutters or nails that have pulled out.
- Check gutters for proper slope to prevent standing water. Clean gutters and downspouts twice a year. This is the number one source of basement water problems.

EXTERIOR

- Brick and Stone: Look for settlement cracks, loose mortar and loose bricks or stones.
- Hardcoat Stucco: Look for movement cracks, cracks between the stucco and wood trim, flaking and loose areas.
- Synthetic Stucco: Recommend a professional inspection.
- Wood or Composition Siding: Look for open end and butt joints, open nail holes and separation along the bottom lip. Paint hard board or oriented strand board siding every four years.
- Vinyl Siding: Look for holes in the siding.

- Wood Trim: Look for peeling paint, wood decay and open joints. Caulk and paint as needed.
- Make sure siding or stucco does not extend below grade.

DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Check the condition of the caulking and paint.
- Check trim and sills for wood decay.
- Look for loose or missing window pane glazing.
- Check the weather-stripping on all doors and along the bottoms of all windows.
- Make sure all windows open easily and are not painted shut.

FOUNDATIONS

- Look for settlement cracks in the walls, porches and steps.
- Make sure all grading slopes away from the structure.
- Make sure all downspout have splash blocks and rain water runs away from the structure.

DECKS

- Check the base of the support post for decay. If steel posts extend below grade, dig down to the bottoms and inspect.
- Make sure all floor joist are supported by either joist hangers or 2x2 ledger strips.
- Check the flashing where the deck meets the house. If none is present, look for decay behind the deck.
- Make sure the deck is thru-bolted to the house structure with a minimum of 1/2" diameter bolts every 48 inches.
- If you have small children, be sure all railing will not permit a 4" ball to pass thru any openings in the rails.
- Make sure all stairs are firmly attached and there are not any loose steps.
- Look for wood decay on all deck members.

ATTICS

- Keep all vents open both winter and summer.
- Test power roof ventilators.
- Look for water stains on any of the framing and insulation.
- Look for broken or split rafters and braces.
- Check the fiberglass insulation. The current requirement is R-30 which is approximately 12 inches deep.
- Make sure the insulation is not covering the soffit vents along the eaves.
- Do not store anything on top of the insulation. Compressing the insulation reduces the efficiency.

BASEMENTS

- Check all foundation walls for water leaks during hard rains.

Check foundation walls for cracks. Horizontal cracks represent a problem. Contact a professional if cracks are 1/4" or wider.

INTERIOR

- Check all ceilings for water stains (clear brown stains).
- Look for water stains on the floors around all exterior doors.
- Clean fireplace chimneys.
- Test and change batteries on the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Replace any detector over 10 years old.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector if you do not have one and have gas heat.
- Check the pressure on all fire extinguishers. Be sure you have one on each floor, kitchen and garage.
- Test your door bell.
- Clean your refrigerator coils.
- Purchase a rope ladder for the second story.

GARAGE

- Check garage door opener safety reverses.
- Tighten all hardware on garage overhead doors.
- Lubricate all door rollers and chains.

ELECTRICAL

- Test all GFCI electrical receptacles. Recommend installing at all wet or damp locations.
- Test all AFCI panel breakers if present.
- Trip all electrical panel breakers.
- Label the electrical panel circuit breakers.
- If a panel breaker trips consistently, call an electrician.

PLUMBING

- Test your water heater T&P valve. Be sure to drain the water out of the pipe if possible.
- Check all plumbing fixtures and sink drains for leaks. Repair any drip or leak.

- Test your main water shut-off valve.
- Check your gas meter shut off valve for leaks. Use a soap and water mixture and spray on all joints.
- Drain all exterior water faucets (hose bibbs) in the winter.
- Service all septic tanks every five years.

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

- Change or cleans all filters when dirty.
- Clean and service all humidifiers yearly.
- Service all furnaces each spring and fall.
- Furnaces over 15 years old should have the heat exchangers inspected each year.
- Clean all shrubbery away from the air conditioner condensers.

If you have a question, comment, or home tip, send your letter to *Home Tips*, Christian Building Inspectors, Inc., 3697 Habersham Lane, Duluth, Georgia 30096. You can email your questions to us at rod@cbiga.com.

We reserve the right to edit questions for length.

Quote Of The Month

**"IT ISN'T THE LOAD THAT BREAKS US
DOWN, IT'S THE WAY WE CARRY IT"**

- UNKNOWN

A Tip Of The Hat To:

Patrick Nicholson
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Thank You

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