



Home Tips®



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 3697 HABERSHAM LANE, DULUTH, GEORGIA 30096, 770-849-0920 • MAY 2006 •

Q & A

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN....

It's time for the following maintenance on your home:

EXTERIOR

Start at the roof and look for broken or worn shingles. If the roof is over 15 years old, it will be nearing the end of its useful life. Steeper pitched roofs should be inspected from a ladder only. Check the rubber roof flashing boots for plumbing vent pipes. They have a tendency to crack with age. Also, inspect the galvanized flue pipes for rust. Rust holes will allow water to enter down the pipe into the appliance. The last item on the roof is the chimney. Check for deterioration and damage.



Gutters should be inspected for rusting and deterioration, especially at the joints. Do they need cleaning? Verify all downspouts are flowing freely by running a garden hose down them and checking the water flow. Are the downspouts causing erosion? Install splash blocks or drain pipes as needed.

Look around the eaves for wood decay. Are there water stains on the plywood soffit? If so, this could be a sign of a roof leak.

The entire exterior of the house should be inspected for wood decay, open joints in the wood and the need for painting. This was described in detail in last month's issue of HomeTips.

Does the house need painting? Are there open joints in the wood? Is the paint peeling? Can you see wood grain showing? If you could apply shrink wrap around the entire exterior of the house, you would seal every crack and crevice. Since this is not feasible, you need to do exactly the same thing with caulking and paint. Do not leave any crack for moisture to enter.

Inspect all of the windows. Is the glazing around the window panes loose and falling out? Are there any broken panes? If the windows are painted shut, this is an excellent time to free them with a putty knife.

Check all doors for proper weather-stripping and verify the bottom of the door seals against the threshold. Open gaps can allow a blowing rain to enter under the door.

Foundation walls should be inspected for cracks and movement. Large cracks are an indication of a foundation or footing problem. A professional engineer may be needed for further evaluation.

Grading is the single most common cause for wet basements and crawl spaces. Does the grading properly slope away from the foundation? If it slopes toward the foundation, additional grading may be needed to eliminate water running against the foundation. If grading is not possible, many people have had success by installing a French drain.

Wood decks should be inspected for wood decay. Be sure to inspect the bottom of wood support posts and probe below ground level for decay. Make sure every deck is bolted to the house structure with a minimum of 1/2" bolts spaced every 32". Does the deck have properly installed flashing? The lack of flashing may allow wood decay to develop in the siding behind the deck header.

INTERIOR

Attic should be inspected for water stains on the under side of the roof sheathing. Pay special attention around all roof penetrations. How much insulation do you have? A bare minimum should be 12" and we recommend R-38 which is approximately 16".

Change all furnace and heat pump filters. It is always a good idea to have the units cleaned and serviced at least once a year. Furnaces over twelve years old have a greater chance of having a problem in the burn chamber. When the burn chamber eventually rusts out, which it will, carbon monoxide will leak into the supply air and be distributed throughout the house. Recommend having older furnace heat exchangers inspected by a licensed heating and air conditioning contractor every year until the units are replaced.

If you have gas heat, you should have at least one carbon monoxide detector located in the bedroom hallway. Change the battery and test the unit.

Replace the batteries in all of the smoke detectors and test for proper operation. The newer homes have smoke detectors that are hard wired into the electrical system and have a battery backup. If one detector goes off, they all will. Smoke detectors have an average life of ten years.

If you have a two story home and the bedrooms are located upstairs, we recommend having a chain or rope ladder that can be used for an emergency exit though one of the bedroom windows in case a fire blocks the stairs.

✓ All newer homes are required to have ground fault circuit interrupter electrical receptacles in the kitchen, bathrooms, unfinished basements, garages and outside. GFCI's are safety receptacles that prevent you from being electrocuted. They should be tested monthly to insure they are working properly. They have a test and a reset button on the face of the receptacle. Push the test button and verify the reset button pops out. This will shut off the electricity to the receptacle and every receptacle connected to the GFCI. You then will need to press the reset button to turn the electricity back on.

✓ Each level of your home should have a fire extinguisher installed and readily accessible. This is your first line of defense in case of fire. The two most common areas to have a fire is the kitchen and the garage. Make sure each extinguisher is in good working order by checking the pressure gage. Every gage should be in the green. If the needle has moved into the red area, replace the extinguisher.

✓ All water heaters have thermostats that cut off the heating source when the water is heated to the desired temperature. Gas water heaters have thermostats located on



the outside of the heaters, and electric water heaters have thermostats that are normally located inside. What happens when the thermostats go bad? The burner or heating element will continue to heat the water and can build up enough pressure for the water heater to explode. That is why every water heater must have a temperature and pressure relief

(T&P) valve installed on the outside of the heater. A T&P valve works on the same principle as a pressure cooker pop off valve. If the water reaches 210 degrees or if the pressure inside the tank reaches 150 pounds, the valve opens and

allows the water to safely run to the outside of the home. How do you test the valve? Each valve comes with a test lever that can be raised, and you can hear water running through the valve. What happens if the valve is frozen and can no longer be raised? The valve is considered defective and should be replaced immediately by a licensed plumber.

If you have a question, change of address, comment, home tip or would like to send *Home Tips* to your clients, send your letter to *Home Tips*, Christian Building Inspectors, Inc., 3697 Habersham Lane, Duluth, Georgia, 30096-6111. You can also E-Mail your questions to us at rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com.

Quote Of The Month

"DEVELOP SUCCESS FROM FAILURES.
DISCOURAGEMENT AND FAILURE ARE
TWO OF THE SUREST STEPPING STONES
TO SUCCESS."

DALE CARNEGIE

A Tip Of The Hat To:

Lucinda Coelho

Re/Max Executives

2260 North Druid Hills Road

Atlanta, Georgia 30329



Thank You

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- Office: 1-888-257-0365 or 770-849-0920, Fax 770-849-0540, Cell 404-697-4129 •
- Web Page: www.christianbuildinginspectors.com Email: rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com •



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