

Homeowner Checklist

Here's a simple bi-annual "Top to Bottom" checklist to keep your home in shape year round, courtesy of Bob Villa.

- Roof:** Check roof and around vents, skylights and chimneys for leaks. Repair as necessary.
- Attic:** (Fall) Close vents to conserve heat. (Spring) Open vents to ensure proper ventilation.
- Gutters:** Clean gutters and drain pipes so leaves won't clog them and be sure they drain away from the house. (Fall: In cold-climate areas) Drain outside faucets.
- Fireplace:** Clean fireplace of ashes. (Fall) Check chimney for loose or missing mortar. Have chimney professionally cleaned. Make sure damper closes tightly. (Spring) Leave damper open for improved ventilation if the home is not air-conditioned
- Filters:** Remember to clean or replace filters once a month, or as needed. Check and clean dryer vent, air conditioner, and stove hood and room fans. Keep heating and cooling vents clean and free from furniture and draperies.
- Safety Equipment:** Ensure that all smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers are in good working order. Replace batteries in appropriate devices as needed, or at least twice each year.
- Air Conditioner:** (Fall: In cold-climate areas) Remove window air-conditioners, or put weatherproof covers on them.
- Refrigerator:** Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a dollar bill. If you can pull the bill out easily, the latch may need to be adjusted or the seal may need to be replaced. In addition, if you have a coil-back refrigerator, vacuum the coils at least twice each year. Your refrigerator will run more efficiently with clean coils. Also, stock up! A full refrigerator uses less energy than an empty one.
- Faucets:** Check for leaky faucets in kitchen and bathroom(s). Replace washers as necessary.
- Windows and Doors:** Seal drafty doors and windows. If you added up all of the small cracks where heating and cooling escapes from a home, it would be the same as having a window open. Replace seals as needed.
- Storm Windows and Screens:** (Fall) Take down screens (if removable type) and replace with storm windows. (Spring) Remove, clean, and store storm windows (if removable). Check and patch all door and window screens. Put screens up (if removable type).
- Siding and Paint:** Look for cracks and holes in house siding or paint. Replace caulk if necessary. A carpet knife can work well for cutting away old caulking from house siding. Slice down alongside it from both directions with the hook-like blade, then use the knife to lift out the old caulk bead intact.
- Basement:** Check basement walls and floor for dampness. Be sure to clean dehumidifier regularly, if you have one.
- Heating System:** (Fall) Have heating system serviced. Change filters.
- Hot Water Heater:** (Fall) Drain hot water heater. Remove sediment from the bottom of the tank.