
11 Essential Summer Home Maintenance Tips

Another summer is here, and if you endured a couple seasons of harsh weather conditions, or if you have some deferred maintenance to take care of, it's time to get started. Rain, wind, and other weather fun may have wreaked havoc with your roof, your fence, or your yard, but the "obvious" fixes are only the beginning. Use this guide to help you address some common issues that can help you fix up your home this summer and help it run - and look - better all year long.

Clean out your gutters

There's no telling what kind of crud has collected in there since the last time you cleaned them out. Bob Vila has some creative techniques for DIY gutter cleaning, including reversing the suction of a Shop Vac!

Do a deep fridge cleanout

Have some unidentified leftovers in a Tupperware way in the back or a long-ago expired jar of pickles in the door? The first step is to chuck it all - but make sure to schedule your cleanout to coincide with the trash pickup for the week. The last thing you want is a jar of mayo sitting out in the bin for five consecutive 100-degree days.

While you're attacking the refrigerator, don't forget to address the coils. "The condenser coils on a refrigerator remove heat from inside the unit; and if they get dusty and dirty, it can cost up to \$100 more a year to run your fridge," said Today's Homeowner. "The coil is located either on the bottom behind the kickplate, or on the back of the refrigerator. To clean refrigerator coils, turn off the power to the fridge, then vacuum the coils using a homemade wand from a cardboard gift wrap tube or a vacuum cleaner brush attachment."

Change the batteries in your smoke detectors

Per Consumer Reports, smoke alarm batteries should be changed out every six months. To make it easier to remember when it's time, do what the uber-organized do: Put yourself on a twice-a-year-schedule in summer and winter (June 1 and December 1, for instance), and mark the dates in your phone so you don't forget.

Change out your filters

This is one of those areas where homebuyers don't tend to heed product manufacturers' guidelines. The general recommendation is every 30–60 days. Service Experts recommends:

“Average” suburban home without pets: every 90 days

Add a dog or cat: every 60 days

Add more than one pet or anyone has allergies: 20-45 days”

Been a little longer than that for you? That means dust, dirt, and allergens could be invading your home.

Deep clean your carpets

You should be doing this at least once a year to protect your carpets and limit allergens. Summer is the perfect time in most climates because the rainy season has passed, which means there's less likelihood of kids and pets tracking in mud. If you want to save a little money, don't mind the elbow grease, and won't cringe at the site of the filth that gets sucked out of the carpet, you can easily DIY this task by renting a machine at the supermarket.

Have your air conditioning unit serviced

If you're the type who only makes a call about your air conditioning when it's not working, consider this: Units that are serviced regularly tend to last longer and have a lower incidence of breaking down, which always seems to happen on the day when the heat index breaks a record.

“Heating and cooling experts on Angie’s List say, “It’s a good idea to have it inspected, serviced and cleaned once a year.” This helps “ensure it operates at peak energy efficiency and is ready to cool your house during the months you need it most. As your HVAC system runs, it accumulates dust and dirt in key areas that affect its efficiency, like the condensing coils and air filters. Left unchecked, your A/C system can lose 5 percent of its operating efficiency each year because of this buildup, meaning it can’t cool your house as capably as it could if it were clean.”

Check your deck

“Look over your deck for signs of rotting and hammer in any nails that are poking up,” said The Nest. “Then, determine if your deck needs sealing. Sprinkle water on the deck’s boards. If the water beads up, you’re in good shape; but if it soaks right in, it’s time to reseal that sucker.

Showerheads

If you haven’t cleaned your showerhead in a year - or, ever - it’s well past time. This involves one of our favorite home maintenance tips of all time, because it takes almost zero effort (You can’t beat lazy cleaning tasks!).

“First slip a rubber band over the top of the showerhead. You may want to loop it around the shower arm once or twice so the plastic bag will stay in place,” said Better Homes and Gardens. “Then fill a plastic bag with white vinegar. Attach the bag to the showerhead by slipping the top of it underneath the rubber band. Wait one hour, then remove the bag and turn on the water to flush. Polish with a soft cloth.”

Examine your clothes dryer vent

This is a critically important maintenance issue and should be done regularly - about “once a year depending on the size of the household and dryer usage,” said TODAY. Not only will a clean vent make your dryer run more efficiently and dry your clothes faster, but it will also help keep your home and family safe. “Dryer vents accumulate highly flammable lint, and failure to clean out lint is the leading cause of dryer fires. According to the National Fire Protection Agency, over 15,000 dryer fires occurred in the U.S. in 2010. A plugged dryer vent can also burn out the heating element.”

Check your roof

A strong storm season may have left you with loose tiles or shingles. Now is the time to have your roof checked to make sure you won’t end up with leaks when the rain comes again.

Do a leak check

Chances are, your utilities will cost more in the summer because of the expense of cooling your home, so every little bit of savings helps. Not to mention your commitment to saving natural resources! “Check your hoses and exterior faucets for leaks -- even a tiny drip can add up to a big waste of water,” said The Nest. “Pinhole leaks in hoses can be covered up by winding regular electrical tape around the (dry) hose in overlapping layers.”

<http://realtymag.com/consumeradvice/homeownersadvice/item/1002807-20170605-11-essential-summer-home-maintenance-tips?rtmpage>