



Summer home maintenance

Your home is one of your biggest investments. The best way to protect that investment is to conduct regular inspections and keep your home maintenance up-to-date.

Setting up a routine maintenance schedule will not only keep your home in top shape, it will also help you to prevent small problems from becoming bigger and more costly issues. During the summer, there are a number of indoor and outdoor maintenance tasks to look after. Some of these include repairing walkways and steps, painting, and checking your chimney and roof. Keep in mind that it's not necessary to take care of these tasks all at once. In fact, the work won't feel as overwhelming if you spread the chores out over the summer months.

Start by doing an assessment of what needs to be done. Take a walk around your home and check for, and seal off, any holes in the exterior cladding (but not the small vent holes found at the bottom of brick walls) that could be an entry point for rain or small pests such as bats or squirrels.

Next, inspect the condition of your roof — by using binoculars from the ground — and note any sagging that could indicate structural problems. If you do notice sagging, you may need to investigate further from inside the attic or hire a qualified contractor to do a more detailed inspection. While you are examining the roof, note the condition of your shingles to see if any need replacing, and examine all roof flashings, such as at the chimney and roof joints, for any signs of cracking or leakage.

Summer is a good time to clean or replace your air conditioning or furnace filter, and wash or replace your ventilation system filters if necessary. Take the time to ensure that the outdoor air conditioning unit is free of leaves and other debris that could block airflow. Windows are another important component of your house that requires regular attention. This might be an ideal time to give them a thorough cleaning, re-caulk if necessary and repair any damaged screens.

A common summertime issue for homeowners is moisture problems caused by high levels of humidity — especially in the basement. Check your basement pipes for condensation or dripping as this can often be a sign that the humidity in your basement is too high and you need to take corrective action to reduce humidity.

It's a good idea to monitor your basement humidity and avoid relative humidity levels above 60%. But instead of guessing whether or not you have a humidity problem inside your house, you can get a small, inexpensive and easy-to-use instrument called a hygrometer and place it in your basement. If you discover the moisture levels are too high, deal with any leaks or other moisture sources and consider using a dehumidifier to maintain safe relative humidity. Insulating your cold water pipes will also help.

Once you've got your routine down, regular home maintenance will be easy. To help you with your summer chores, and to keep your home in top shape all year round, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has a free About Your House fact sheet entitled, Home Maintenance Schedule.

For your copy visit us online at www.cmhc.ca or call our toll-free number, 1-800-668-2642.