

HOME MAINTENANCE



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

• INTRODUCTION	1
• Tools	2
• Hiring a Repairperson or Contractor	3
• ELECTRICAL SYSTEM	
Circuit Breaker/Fuse Panel	4
Safety Precautions	5
Power Failure— Troubleshooting Guide	6
• PLUMBING SYSTEM	
Water Supply Valves	7
Septic Systems	8
Preventative Maintenance	9
Faucet Repairs	10
Drain & Toilet Repairs	11
• HEATING SYSTEM	
Types of Heating Systems	12
Space Heaters	13
Routine Maintenance	14
Changing Furnace Filter	15
Heating System Failure— Troubleshooting Guide	16
• VENTILATION SYSTEM	
Types of Vents	17
Foundation Vents	18

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(CONTINUED)

- **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

Thermostat Setting	19
Hot Water Heater	20
Weatherization	21
Weatherstripping	22
Caulking	23

- **GENERAL INDOOR REPAIRS**

Replacing Broken Glass	24
Patching Holes	25
Paint Types; Tools & Supplies	26
Preparing Surfaces for Painting	27
Hanging Pictures	28
Types of Wall Fasteners	29

- **GENERAL OUTDOOR REPAIRS**

Roof	30
Exterior Painting	31
Siding	32
Brick & Block	33

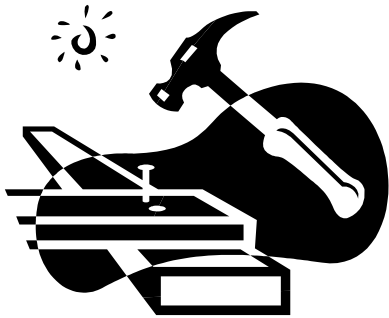
- **HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST**



HOME MAINTENANCE TOOLS

The following is a suggested list of tools for maintaining your home. These tools and supplies will allow you to take care of most minor repairs and maintenance tasks.

- Screwdriver Set—assorted flathead and Phillip’s head
- Hammer (regular claw-type)
- Utility Knife or Razor
- Adjustable Crescent Wrench
- Pliers with Insulated Handles
- 2” Putty Knife
- Tape Measure or Folding Ruler (12’ or longer)
- Caulking Gun
- Extension Ladder or Step Ladder
- Sandpaper (assortment)
- Sanding Block (or block of wood—4” piece of 2x4)
- Electrical Tape



OPTIONAL SUPPLIES

The items below are *not required for general home maintenance and repair*. You may be able to borrow them from your neighbors or purchase them at a yard sale.

- Wire Brush
- Work Gloves
- Spackling; Glazing Compound



HIRING REPAIRPERSON

HIRING A REPAIRPERSON OR CONTRACTOR

Doing small repairs yourself can help save money. You can also add value to your home through improvement projects such as remodeling or adding a room. In either case, there are some repairs and improvements that you may not be able to do yourself. You will then need to call a repairperson or contractor.



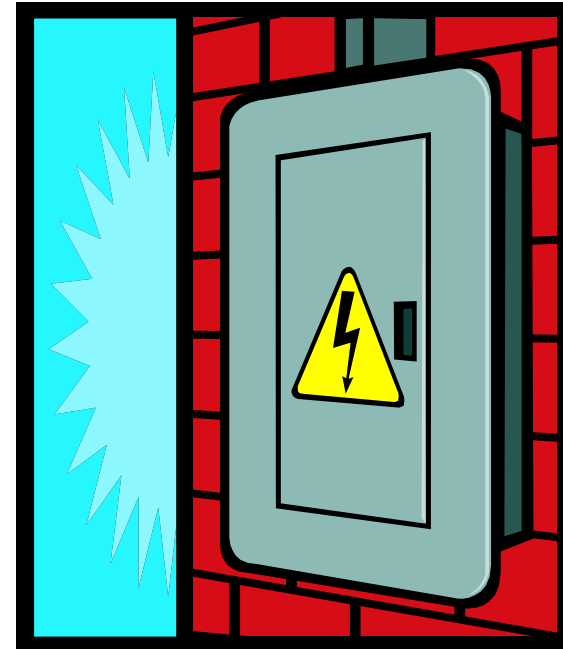
Selecting a Repairperson or Contractor

- Try to use a repairperson or contractor *recommended* by a friend, neighbor, or family member who has had similar work done.
- If your warranty calls for a repairperson with special qualifications, be sure the person you hire will meet those qualifications.
- Call the *Better Business Bureau* to find out if there are any complaints against the person you hire or their company.
- Get 2 or 3 *written estimates* for major repairs or improvements.

After you have selected a repairperson or contractor:

- Ask for a *written contract* for all work to be done. Read and understand the contract before you sign in.
- *Never* pay in advance.
- Do not give the repairperson or contractor a key to your house. Do not go on vacation while work is being done.

CIRCUIT BREAKER/FUSE PANEL ELECTRICAL SYSTEM



CIRCUIT BREAKERS & FUSE PANELS

- **Locate your Circuit Breaker or Fuse Panel**

It may be in your basement or utility room. The *Main* circuit breaker or fuse controls the flow of electricity *to all parts of your house*. It is usually at the top of the panel. The other circuit breakers or fuses in the panel control the flow of electricity to different parts of your house.

- **Label all circuits in panel**

Each circuit breaker controls the outlets and switches in one or more rooms. Identify which breaker or fuse controls each room and label your panel.

- **Don't cover the Circuit Breaker/Fuse Panel or put things in front of it**

This panel should be easy to get in to case of an emergency.



SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Don't operate electrical appliances *in or near water*.
- Don't overload circuits with too many appliances and don't use multiple plugs.
- Don't run power cords under rugs and furniture.
- Don't use light duty extension cords to run appliances with motors—use heavy duty cords.
- Don't use an appliance with a broken wire.

TROUBLESHOOTING

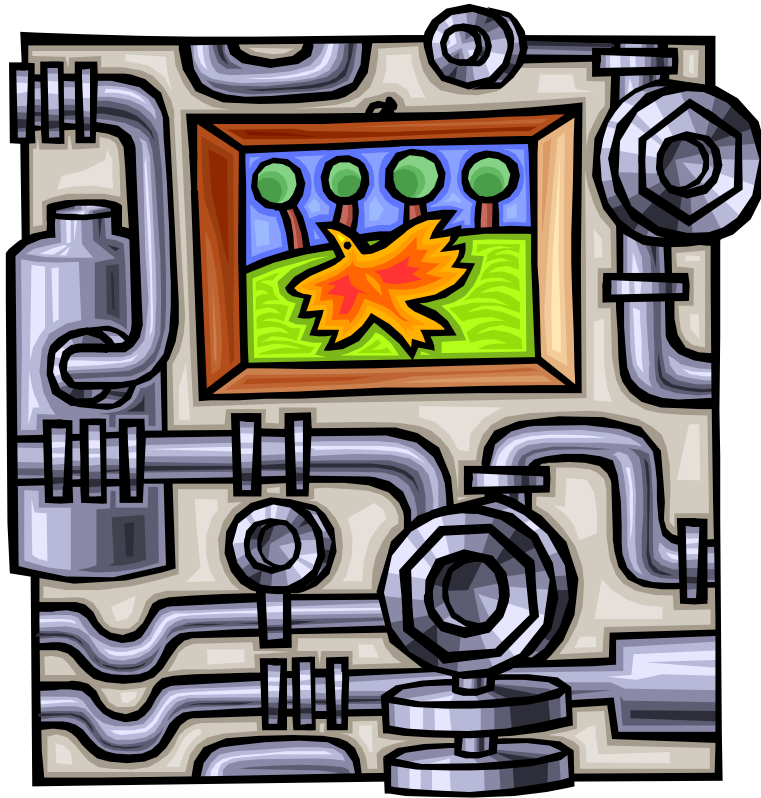
ELECTRICAL SYSTEM



POWER FAILURE

If an electrical appliance you are using will not work or suddenly turns off, follow these steps to find out what the problem is:

1. Check to see that the appliance is plugged in all the way.
2. Check to see if the on/off switch is in the ON position.
3. Some wall switches control outlets. Turn wall switch ON if needed.
4. Make sure the circuit breaker/fuse is on.
5. Plug appliance into another outlet to see if it works there.
6. Check the appliance instructions or owner's manual for a troubleshooting guide.
7. Call an electrician or appliance repairperson.



WATER SUPPLY VALVES PLUMBING SYSTEM

WATER SUPPLY VALVES

- **Locate the Main Water Supply Valve and *Label It***

Look in the basement or crawl space. Make sure it turns on/off and does not leak.

- **Locate Sink, Toilet, Tub, Clothes Washer and Hot Water Heater Valves**

Look under or behind the sink, washer, etc. Sinks, tubs, washers, and water heaters have 2 valves (hot and cold). Toilets have one valve (cold). Make sure all valves work properly.

HINT: If you turn off your water, turn your hot water heater off too. If the hot water heater is left on, the heating element and tank may be damaged.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS PLUMBING SYSTEMS

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

- Know general location of tank and field.

Call the *Health Department* to see if they have a map of your system. If not, draw your own map. Look for evidence of the drainfield in areas where grass does not grow well or lawn is slightly depressed. In winter, look for area where snow melts quickly. Measure and record distances from corners of the field and center of septic tank using your house as a reference point.



- Don't drive, build, or plant over tank or field.
- Try to use less water to reduce the amount your system must filter.
- Have your septic system pumped out every 3 or 4 years. Keep a record of pumpout dates.
- Don't put food scraps, paper towels, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins & tampons, harmful substances, or chemicals into your septic system. These include: coffee grounds, household and automotive chemicals, insecticides, or petroleum based products (paint thinners, gasoline, etc.) of any type.
- Watch for signs that your system is failing. Your drains may become slower or backed-up. You may also notice sewage seeping to the surface of drainfield.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE PLUMBING SYSTEM



PREVENTING PLUMBING PROBLEMS

- Look for signs of water leaks: water spots or rust spots under sinks, water heater, and washer; dark spots on ceilings and walls. *Severe leaks may cause ceilings to sag.*
- Use drain strainers in sinks and tubs to prevent clogs.
- Don't flush paper towels, disposable diapers, or tampons down the toilet.
- Don't put grease down drains.
- To keep pipes from freezing, close foundation vents in fall & winter. Wrap exposed pipes and leave heat on low when house is vacant or you are on vacation.

FAUCET REPAIRS

PLUMBING SYSTEM



1. Shut off water at sink supply valves.
2. Loosen packing nut and remove screw holding washer.
3. Put in new washer and replace screw.
4. Put valve back in faucet and screw in.
5. Tighten packing nut; turn water back on.

MINOR PLUMBING REPAIRS

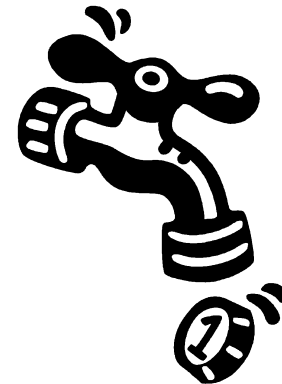
Plumbing repairs should be made as soon as possible to prevent damage to your home and to avoid high water bills.

HINT: If your water bill suddenly goes up even though you are not using more water (and the water company has not raised its rates), it may be due to a leaking pipe or faucet.

• LEAKING FAUCET

Tools & Supplies

- Screwdriver (flathead or Phillip's as needed)
- Adjustable Wrench or Pliers
- Seat Washer (purchase at hardware store)



TOILET DOES NOT FLUSH

1. Check chain on handle to see if it is connected to plunger –reconnect chain.
2. Check valve seat on bottom of tank to see if it clogged—remove obstruction.
3. Check water level in tank. Tank should be filled up to “full” line marked on side.
4. Adjust water level by bending float arm or by raising or lowering float cup depending on design of flush valve.



BLOCKED DRAIN

Try to loosen clog first with hand plunger. If this does not work, use chemical drain cleaner. Follow instructions on container carefully.

TOILET RUNS CONSTANTLY

This problem is often due to a poor fit between the plunger (tank ball) and flush valve seat.

1. Check plunger to see if it is sealing properly. Adjust or replace plunger.
2. Check flush valve seat. Adjust or replace if necessary.
3. Check position of float ball—it should be floating on top of water. Adjust or replace float ball or adjust inlet valve.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE HEATING SYSTEM



TYPES OF HEATING SYSTEMS

There are many types of heating systems. Many homes use one of these types:

Forced Air:

Furnace may be powered by electricity, natural gas, propane or oil; heated air is blown by furnace fan through air ducts leading to each room. One thermostat controls entire system.

Baseboard:

Electric units installed along the baseboards in each room. Each room has its own thermostat to control the heating units.

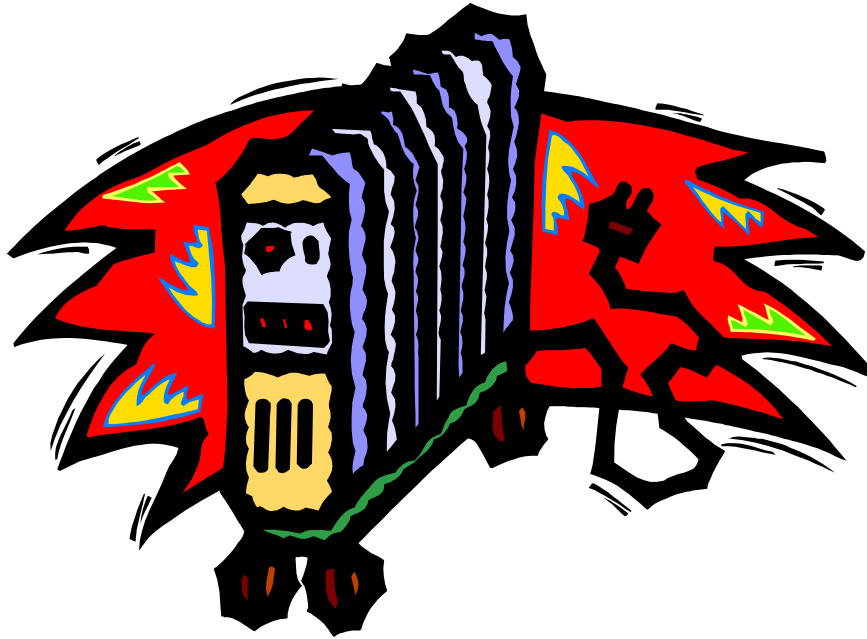
Wood Stove:

Usually located in the kitchen or main living area. Heat is from burning logs inside the stove. Requires chimney pipe to vent smoke to outside. May have another duct carrying heated air to next room.

Water or Steam Systems:

Usually powered by oil, gas, or coal furnace. Hot water or steam circulates through *radiators* which heat each room. One thermostat controls the entire system.

SPACE HEATERS HEATING SYSTEM



SPACE HEATERS

Space heaters should only be used in an emergency.

If your heating system does not work, call a professional for help.

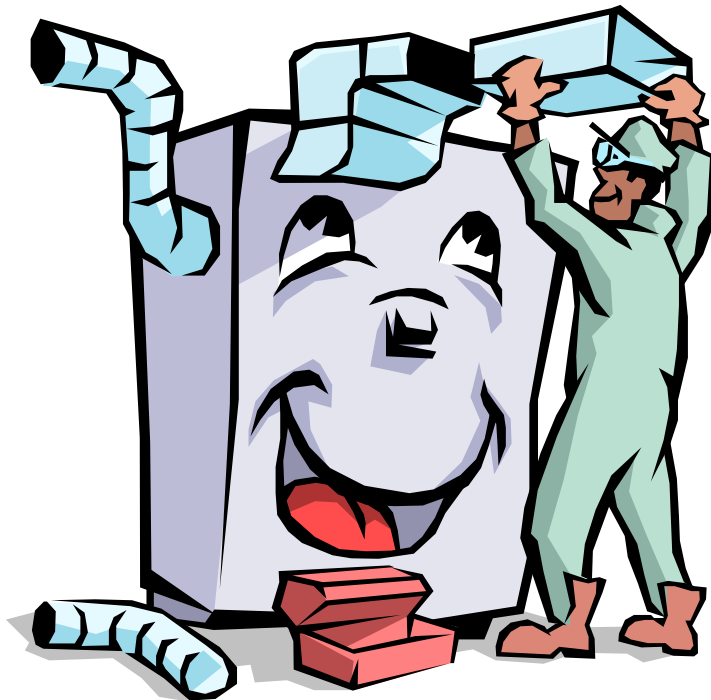
- Do not use kerosene space heaters in living spaces
Fumes from kerosene heaters are deadly.
- Never use space heaters overnight.
- Never leave a space heater on when you leave your house.
- Never leave children or pets alone near a space heater.
- Never store flammable materials inside your house.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE HEATING SYSTEM

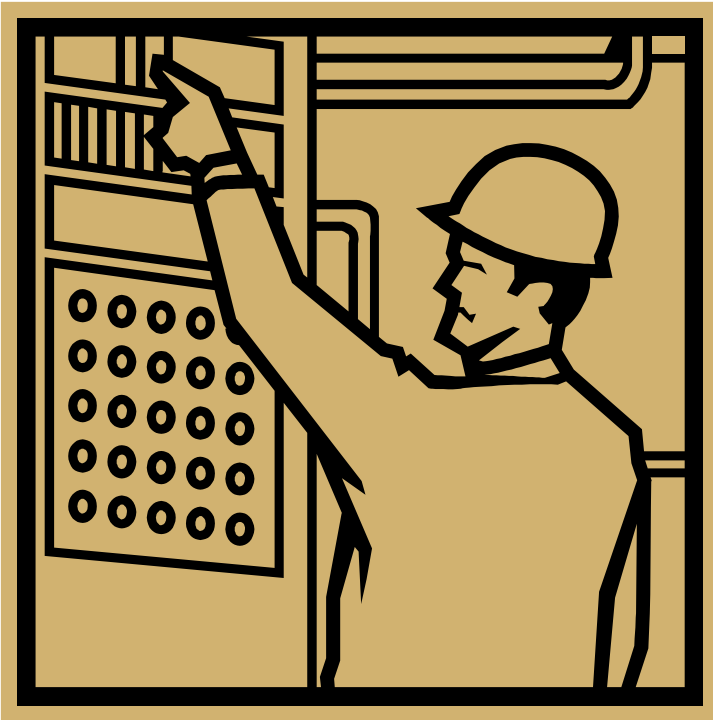
ROUTINE HEATING SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance of your heating system will help it last longer and work better. Each type of heating system requires special care. The list below gives you some general instructions for most systems:

- Know where the fuel supply cut off valve for your furnace or heater is. Learn how to operate it.
 - Electric heaters have an on/off switch or can be turned off at circuit breaker or fuse box.
 - If your pilot goes out, call the gas company to have them re-light it.



- Keep air intakes *clean and free of obstructions*. If you block these, your furnace will have to work harder to pull in air to heat. Your bill will be higher and your furnace may wear out faster.
- Change your furnace filter *every 4 to 6 weeks* during heating season. See instructions on following page.
- Have a professional service your furnace annually including routine cleaning of fan, ductwork, and inspection of heat exchanger. Oil furnaces generally require more frequent maintenance than furnaces using other gas or electricity.
- If you use your wood stove a lot, have your vent and ducts cleaned *every year*.



CHANGING FURNACE FILTER HEATING SYSTEM

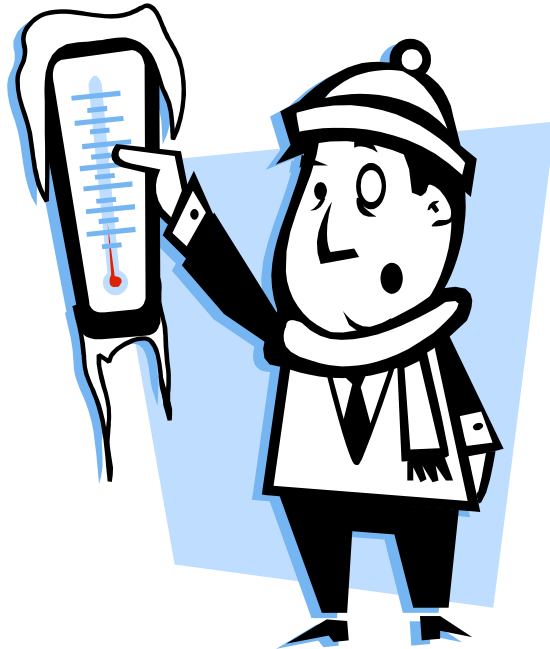
CHANGING FURNACE FILTER

ONCE EVERY 4 to 6 WEEKS
(during heating season)

Your furnace will work better with a clean filter. New filters may be purchased at local hardware or grocery stores. Some filters will last as long as 3 months but will cost more money. Be sure to buy the proper size and install it in the correct direction.

*HINT: If your furnace has a metal filter, you do not need to buy a new filter.
Clean filter in warm soapy water and use again.*

TROUBLESHOOTING HEATING SYSTEM



IF YOUR HEAT WON'T TURN ON

If your heat won't turn on, follow these steps to find out what the problem may be.

1. Check *thermostat*.

Control should be in the ON or HEAT position. Furnace should turn on automatically when temperature in room drops to setting on thermostat.

Slowly move temperature setting HIGHER. Furnace should turn on when thermostat setting is *higher* than actual room temperature.

2. Check *circuit breaker* for furnace. Also check fuse or circuit breaker on furnace if there is one.

3. Check *fuel supply*. Fill if necessary.

4. If you have a *gas furnace*, check to see if the *pilot light* is lit. If you smell the odor of natural gas, turn off gas supply valve. Call a professional to relight pilot light.

5. If your heat still does not turn on, *call a professional for help*.

VENTILATION SYSTEM

Your home's ventilation system is made up of a number of different parts which work together to help your roof last longer, keep moisture from building up in your home, and to help keep your home cooler in the summer. The actual parts are different for each home but generally include: *roof and attic vents, foundation vents, bathroom exhaust fans, and the clothes dryer exhaust vent.*

- Run the bathroom exhaust fan every time you shower or bathe. This will keep moisture from causing mold and mildew.
 - If you have a clothes dryer, run the exhaust vent *to the outside of your home*. Use metal ducting to decrease the chance of fire.
- Roof and attic vents will help your roof last longer and keep your home cooler in summer by drawing out trapped hot air.
 - Do not cover openings with insulation. Keep all roof vents free of obstruction year round.



FOUNDATON VENTS VENTILATION SYSTEM



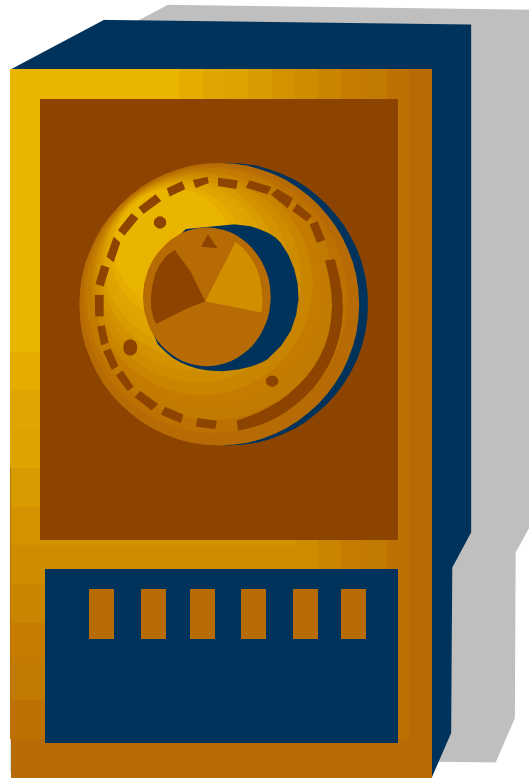
- Open vents in the spring or summer. Air circulating in your crawl space will help to cool your home.

HINT: A plastic vapor barrier on the floor of the crawl space will reduce dampness.

FOUNDATION VENTS

- Close foundation vents in the fall or winter.

HINT: Do not cover openings with insulation or rags—excess moisture may build up beneath your home.



THERMOSTAT SETTING

ENERGY CONSERVATION

THERMOSTAT SETTING

- Lower your utility bills by conserving energy.
- Set your thermostat at *65 degrees in the winter* and *72 degrees in the summer* if you have an air conditioner.

HINT: Turn the heat down at night when you go to sleep and during the day when you leave your house. An automatic thermostat can be programmed to do this for you.

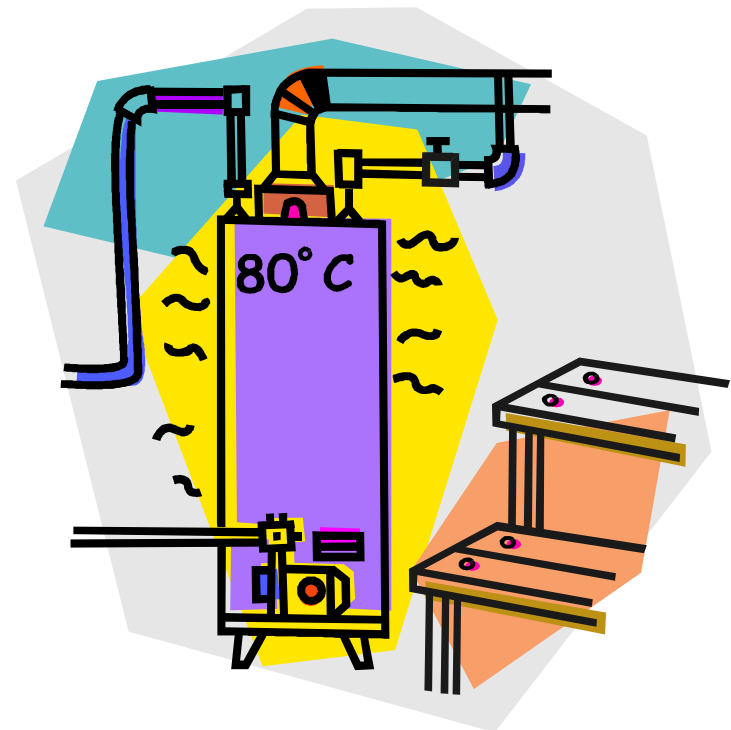
HOT WATER HEATER ENERGY CONSERVATION

HOT WATER HEATER

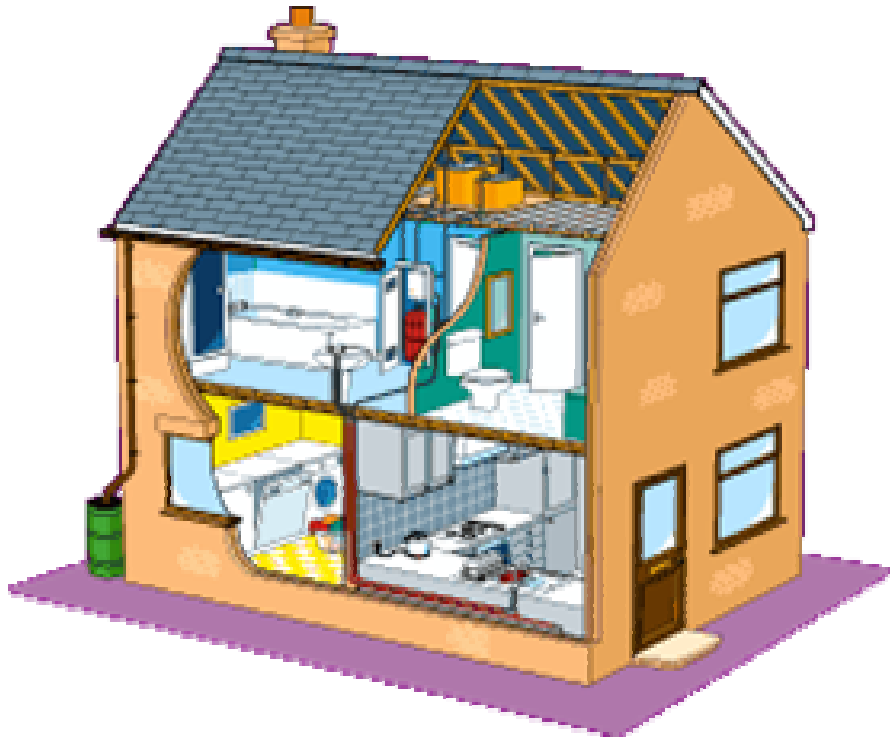
- A large amount of heat is lost through the metal walls of a hot water heater.

HINT: Conserve energy and save money by covering your hot water heater with an insulated jacket and insulating hot water pipes. Insulated jackets are made for electric and gas water heaters. Insulated jackets and pipe insulation can be found at most hardware stores.

- Turn the water temperature setting down to 120 degrees. If you have an electric water heater, turn it off before you go on vacation.



WEATHERIZATION ENERGY CONSERVATION



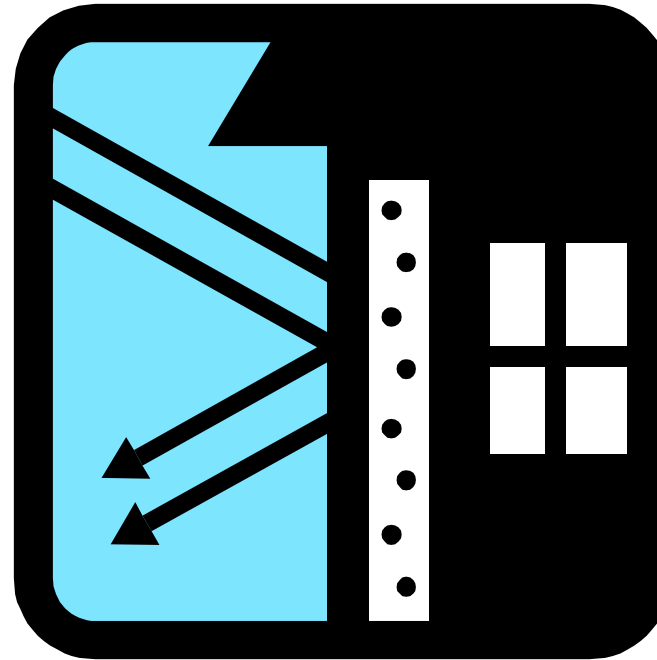
WEATHERIZING YOUR HOME

A *weatherized* home will keep you warm and will help lower your heating bills. Weatherizing includes insulating your walls, attic, and basement and sealing gaps around windows and doors to *keep warm air in and cold air out*.

HINT: Check storm doors and windows in the fall to be sure they close properly.

WEATHER STRIPPING

ENERGY CONSERVATION



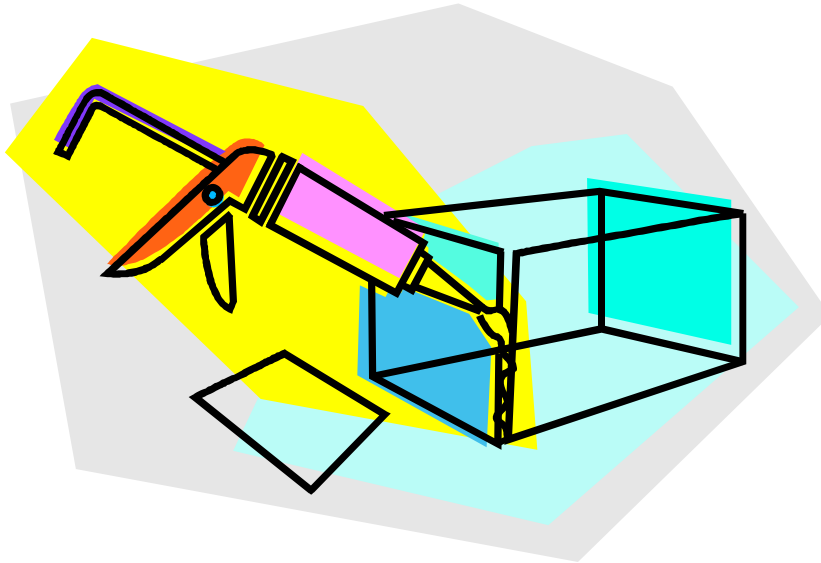
INSTALLING WEATHERSTRIPPING

INSPECT YEARLY

Replace worn, cracked weather stripping as needed. Remove old weather stripping. Brush off loose dirt and clean surface with mild detergent and water solution. Follow product directions to install.

HINT: Rolled vinyl weather stripping is inexpensive, easy to install, and durable. Felt or foam stripping is also inexpensive and easy to install, but not as durable as other types. Thin metal stripping costs more, is very durable, but is harder to install.

CAULKING ENERGY CONSERVATION



CAULKING WINDOWS & DOORS

INSPECT YEARLY

Caulking will help seal doors and windows against cold and heat. Replace old, dry, and cracking caulk as needed. Remove old caulking and brush away dirt. Apply new caulk using a *pushing* motion to force caulk into the joint. Smooth caulk with finger if needed.

HINT: Latex, silicone, or butyl caulk is recommended. These caulks are more expensive but more durable. Oil or resin based caulk is inexpensive but will not last as long. Use oakum (available at hardware store) to fill large gaps and apply caulking over it.

PATCHING HOLES

GENERAL INDOOR REPAIRS

PATCHING HOLES IN WALLS & CEILINGS

TOOLS & SUPPLIES:

- Utility Knife
- Wallboard (gypsum) pieces to fill holes 2" or larger
- Patching Compound (available at hardware store)
- Primer and Paint Brush (spray primer also available)
- 2" Putty Knife (use 4" for larger repairs)
- Fine Sand Paper
- Sanding Block

HINT: A 3" piece of wood works well as a sanding block

- Prepare surface by cleaning away loose dirt, plaster or wallboard. Use utility knife to cut a "plug" of wallboard to fill large holes.
- Place "plug" into hole. Apply patching plaster with putty knife, smoothing it at the edges.
- When plaster is dry, sand patch gently using sandpaper wrapped around sanding block. Reapply plaster if needed. Let dry and sand again until finish is even.
- Seal patch with primer before painting.



PAINTING

GENERAL INDOOR REPAIRS

CHOOSING PAINT

When selecting paint, keep these items in mind:

- *Latex doesn't stick well to oil base paint*
- Latex is easier to work with and clean up
- Rollers are easier and faster for larger areas
- Brushes work best for edges and trim

PAINTING TOOLS & SUPPLIES

You will need the following items to complete most painting projects:

- Detergent and Water Solution (1/4 cup household cleaner/bucket of water)
- Sponges
- Patching Plaster, Putty Knife, and Sandpaper
- Wire Brush (or other stiff brush)
- Drop Cloth (or use old sheets or shower curtains)
- Masking Tape
- Steel Wool, or Sandpaper, or Chemical *Deglosser*
(to prepare "semi-gloss" or "gloss" surfaces)
- Screwdrivers
- Paint and Paint Tray
- Rollers or Brushes
- Step Ladder or Extension Ladder

INTERIOR PAINTING

SUGGESTED PAINT TYPES

For interior painting use:

Flat: walls/ceilings in most rooms

Semi-Gloss: walls/ceilings in kitchen and baths

Semi-Gloss or Gloss: trim, baseboards, doors



PAINTING

GENERAL INDOOR REPAIRS



PREPARING SURFACES FOR PAINTING

Remove all nails and hooks from walls. Wash walls and ceiling with mild detergent/water solution. Patch all holes. Scrape away peeling paint with a stiff brush.

Dull shiny surfaces (those painted previously with gloss or semi-gloss paint) using steel wool, sandpaper, or chemical “deglosser.” Protect floors and furniture with drop-cloths. Apply masking tape around windows, floors, trim work, and areas that are to remain free of paint. Remove outlet plates and switch plate covers before painting.

HANGING PICTURES

GENERAL INDOOR REPAIRS



HANGING PICTURES

Prevent damage to walls by selecting the proper fastener for pictures.

HINT: Try to insert fastener into a wall stud when possible.

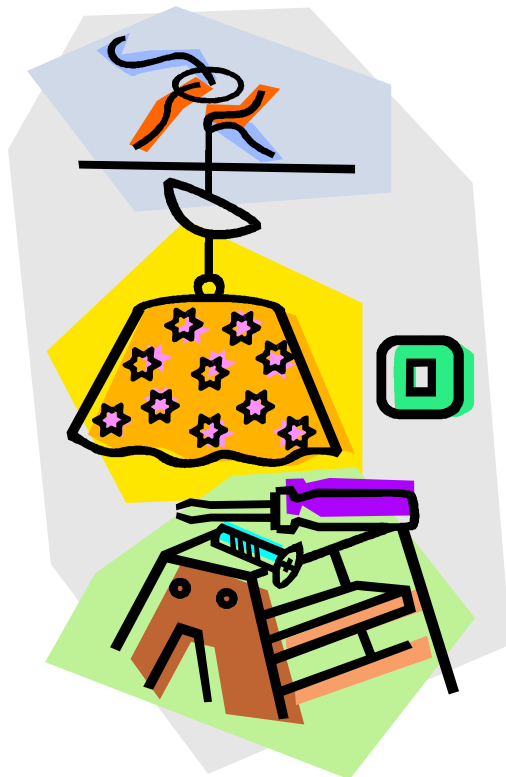
TYPES OF WALL HOOKS & FASTENERS

Drywall Walls

- Nail
- Picture hook
- Gummed hanger
- Molly bolt (heavy objects)
- Toggle bolt (heavy objects)

Plaster Walls:

- Gummed hanger
- Lag screw shield
- Plastic anchor



INSTALLING HOOKS & FASTENERS

Nails and picture hooks are driven into the wall with a hammer.

Gummed hangers have an adhesive backing that will stick to a surface when moistened.

Molly bolts and toggle bolts are flange-type fasteners which fan out behind the wall. They are pushed through a hole drilled into the wall and then tightened like a screw.

Note: the screw may be removed from a molly bolt but the fastener must be drilled out through a larger opening.

Lag screw shields are pushed into a *pre-drilled hole*. A screw is then twisted into the shield and held in place as the shield expands against the hole.

ROOF GENERAL OUTDOOR REPAIRS



ROOF MAINTENANCE

INSPECT PERIODICALLY

Repair damage as soon as you see a problem. Signs of water damage include wetness, sagging ceilings, and dark, moldy spots on ceilings and walls. Inspect your roof for loose, bulging, or curling shingles. Loose flashing around the chimney, vents, and stacks may also let water seep through roof. Follow product directions to repair flashing or call a roofer.

HINT: Cut overhanging branches away from your roof to prevent damage. Do not attach TV antennas or anything else to chimneys.

EXTERIOR PAINTING GENERAL OUTDOOR REPAIRS

EXTERIOR PAINTING

TOOLS & SUPPLIES:

- Wire Brush
- Mild Detergent and Water Solution
(1/4 cup household cleaner to bucket cold water)
- Extension Ladder (if needed)
- Exterior Paint
- Paint Brushes:
5" for large areas
3" for trim work



- Only use paint made for *outdoor* use. Latex paint is easier to work with and cleans up with water.
- Repair or replace all damaged and rotten boards before painting. New boards should be painted with primer coat first.
- Prepare surface to be painted by washing with detergent and water solution. Scrape all peeling paint with wire brush.

SIDING

GENERAL OUTDOOR REPAIRS



CARING FOR SIDING

INSPECT PERIODICALLY

Inspect your siding for signs of damage and wear. Fasten loose boards and replace damaged siding as needed. Wash siding when it becomes dirty. Choose a product made for your type of siding (vinyl, aluminum, painted wood) and follow the product directions. Paint wood siding that is chipped or peeling.

*HINT: Remove mold and mildew by scrubbing with a soft brush or broom using solution of 1/2 cup bleach in bucket of water. Hose off to rinse. **Wear rubber gloves and don't splash beach solution.***

BRICK & BLOCK

Like your roof and siding, brick and block construction materials require routine maintenance to insure that your home will be stable well into the future.

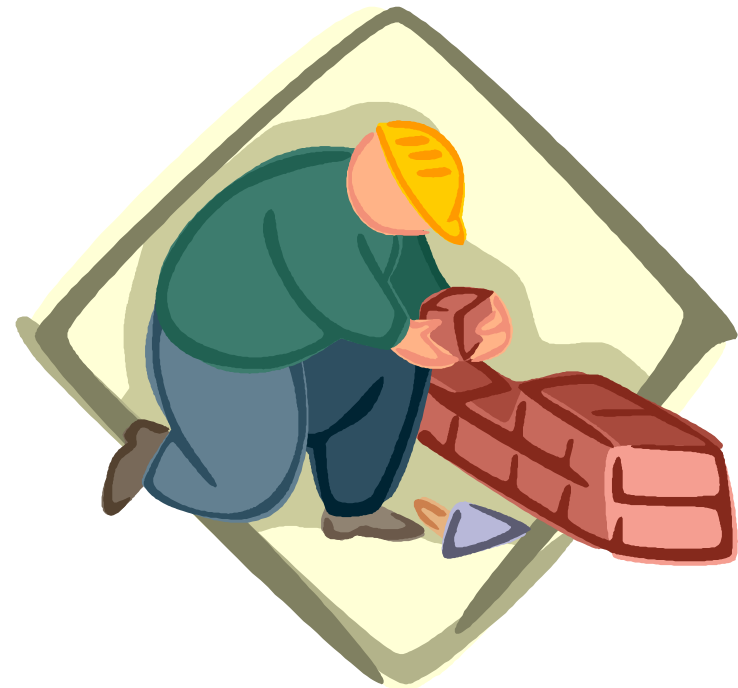
Inspect all masonry for signs of damage and wear. Damaged areas should be repaired as soon as possible.

Masonry areas of your home:

- Foundation
- Stoops and porches
- Walls
- Chimney

Signs of masonry damage and wear:

- Cracking
- Crumbling
- Looseness

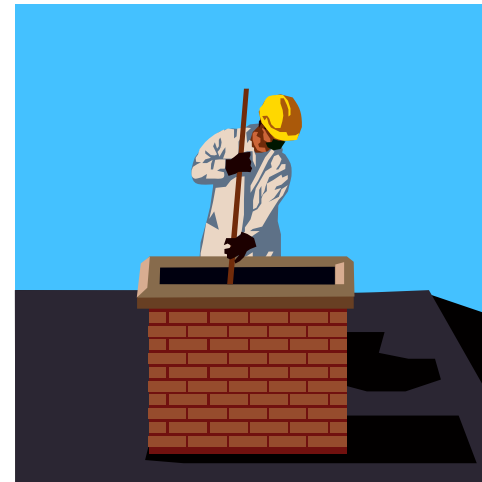


Minor repairs may be made with a commercial patching product. Apply per product instructions.
Seek professional assistance if severe damage is noted.

HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST SEASONAL

FALL & WINTER

- Close foundation vents
- Replace furnace filter (*once/month during heating season*)
- Secure store windows and doors as applicable
 - Replace screen panels with storm panels
 - Close and lock storm windows
- Remove and store window fans
- Secure window unit air conditioner cover
 - or remove and store air conditioning unit as applicable*
- Inspect and replace deteriorated caulking around doors, windows, vents
- Inspect weather stripping around doors and windows;
 - Remove and replace deteriorated weather stripping
- Shut off water supply to outdoor spigots before first freeze;
 - Store hoses to prevent deterioration
- Have chimney cleaned by a professional; *Note: clean more frequently if using wood stove regularly*
- Have furnace cleaned and inspected *yearly* by a heating professional



HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

SEASONAL



SPRING & SUMMER

- Open foundation vents
- Install screens; remove storm windows as applicable
- Install and/or uncover window air conditioning units
- Install window fans.