

# Home Maintenance Calendar

## Maintenance Tips for a Healthy Home

### January

**The cold winter is a great time to do a deep indoor clean to keep your home in good working order. Take the time to do a few of these while cleaning your bathroom:**

- Take a look at the caulking around your shower and tub – if any is cracked, open or damaged then it should be repaired or replaced.
- Remove any mould by scrubbing with unscented detergent and water.
- Clean your exhaust fan to make sure it can work efficiently.
- You can clean drains easily with household nontoxic products:
  - Pour a handful of baking soda into the drain. Add a cup of vinegar.
  - Put the plug in the drain. Let the vinegar and baking soda work for about 20 minutes.
  - Remove plug and run fresh water into the drain.
  - If the drain is clogged, use a small plumbing snake to unclog it.

### February

**Mould in your home can affect your health and the health of your family. Take a few minutes this month to check your home for signs of mould.**

- Wet spots, dampness or signs of a water leak mean there are moisture problems, and mould may follow.
- Sometimes mould cannot be seen – a musty or earthy smell often indicates the presence of mould.

### March

**While you wait for the weather to warm up, focus your efforts indoors and do deep clean of your kitchen. These actions will help maintain your home:**

- Clean your exhaust fan or range hood filter.
- Check under the kitchen sink to make sure there are no leaks in the pipes - If you find any leaks, have them repaired.
- Clean out the area under the sink to keep it clear and easy to spot any leaks.

## April

**As snow melts, leaks or floods can become a major issue. Take a minute to check your home for moisture.**

**If you find moisture or water:**

- In the first 48 hours, dry or remove water-damaged items and construction materials to reduce the risk of mould growth.
- Repair leaks right away.
- Dry flooring, walls, furnishings and other wet items - throw away items that can't be dried.
- Pull carpets and furnishings away from wet walls to let air flow and help them to dry.

## May

**Take advantage of the spring weather to do an outdoor inspection of your home.**

Do a walkaround to look at siding, porches, driveways and patios for cracks, signs of rot or water damage. Report any damage you find to your housing manager.

Clean eavestroughs, downspouts and extensions – remove any leaves or debris left over from the winter.

## June

**June is still a great time for outdoor work! Gentle cleaning helps to preserve the siding on your home.**

To clean moderate dirt. Wash the siding using clear water, a car brush and a hose.

To clean heavy dirt. Clean the surface stains gently with water and a non-detergent, non-abrasive soap. Use a long handled brush and hose gently.

Tip: Never use high pressure and try not to spray upward as this can damage your siding.

## July

**Have you cleaned your HRV filter lately?**

Dirty or clogged filters can lower the ventilation efficiency of your Heat Recovery Ventilator (HRV) and this can negatively impact the air quality in your home. Filters in most new HRVs can be easily removed, cleaned with a vacuum cleaner, and then washed with mild soap and water before being replaced. Older units have replaceable filters. If your HRV is easily accessible, this is only a five minute job.

Try to clean your filters at least every two months. The HRV core can be taken out and cleaned at the same time.

## August

Your heating system should be checked (serviced) annually. Have it serviced this month so any repairs can be done before it gets cold.

Also, take this time to:

- Have your chimneys inspected annually.
- Clean the ashes out of your woodstove by dampening them, putting them in a metal bucket. Place ashes outside and far from your home—seemingly cold ashes on decks or porches have caused house fires.

Ensure thermostats are working properly.

## September

**As it starts to get colder outside, make sure you follow these tips to prevent mould and moisture indoors:**

- Ensure every room in your house is adequately heated. Colder rooms tend to have more condensation and mould problems.
- Prevent and repair leaks. Cracks and holes in walls and ceiling interior surfaces allow moist air to condense in the walls and attics - promoting mould growth.
- Store firewood outside. Even dry firewood releases moisture in your home.

## October

### **Plan to be fire safe**

Fire Prevention week happens every October – Take the time to do these simple things to minimize damage and save lives if a fire starts in your home:

- Plan an escape route in case of fire and practice your plan with family members.
- Identify two emergency exits in case one is blocked by fire.
- Install smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide (CO) sensors - check them regularly to ensure they are working properly.
- Keep your fire extinguisher in a convenient place.

## November

**When it's cold outside, a warm house can be prone to moisture condensation on cold surfaces – follow these steps to heat your house safely and prevent mould.**

- Lower the indoor moisture levels by using bathroom fans and kitchen range hood.
- Heavy curtains or blinds can cause condensation (water) on your windows - Keep window coverings open so warm air can reach the windows and prevent water buildup.
- Make sure furniture does not block air intake grilles or heating supply vents.
- Check that your heating vents and dampers in the floor grille are open.
- Keep inside doors open for better airflow.

## December

Fire prevention is a year round concern - awareness of various causes of fires can help you avoid them. Help keep your family safe by taking extra precautions around your house:

- Never leave candles burning unattended and keep them out of children's reach.
- Keep candles, matches and lighters in a safe place away from children.
- Keep clothing and other flammable materials away from heating sources such as space and baseboard heaters.
- Make sure cigarettes are fully extinguished when finished smoking.