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## Important Home Care Tips

### Upon Taking Ownership

After taking possession of a new home, there are several maintenance and safety issues that you should address immediately. The following checklist will help you with these improvements:

- ✓ Change the locks on all exterior doors, for improved security.
- ✓ Check that all windows and doors operate correctly and have proper locks. Improve window hardware if necessary. Security rods can be added to sliding windows and doors. Consideration could also be given to a security system.
- ✓ Install a minimum of one smoke detector on each level of the home, and ensure that there is a smoke detector outside all sleeping rooms. Replace batteries on any existing smoke detectors and test them.
- ✓ Create a plan of action in the event of a fire in your home. Ensure that there is an operable window or door in every room of the house to the exterior. Consult with your local fire department regarding fire safety issues and what to do in the event of fire.
- ✓ Examine driveways and walkways for trip hazards. Undertake repairs where necessary.
- ✓ Examine the interior of the home for trip hazards. Loose or torn carpeting and flooring should be repaired.
- ✓ Undertake improvements to all stairways, decks, porches and landings where there is a risk of falling or stumbling.
- ✓ Review your home inspection report for any items that require immediate improvements or further investigation. Address these areas as required.
- ✓ Install rain caps and vermin screens on all chimney flues, as necessary.
- ✓ Investigate the location of the main shut-offs for the plumbing, gas and electrical systems. If you attended the home inspection walk-through, these items should have been pointed out to you.
- ✓ If you don't currently have a termite service, have a thorough termite inspection. Follow up on any treatment and repair recommendations. Keep your termite protection current, it will save you money in the long run.

## **Monthly**

- ✓ Check the filters on your heating/cooling unit. If you have humidifiers and electronic air cleaners, their filters should also be checked. Change or clean on the recommended schedule.
- ✓ Check faucets for drips and the rest of the plumbing for leaks. Repairing minor drips and leaks can prevent major water damage in the future. It also will help with conservation and keep down your water bill. Also check to make sure that all toilets and other fixtures are properly installed and securely fastened.
- ✓ Check that fire extinguishers exist and are fully charged. Purchase or re-charge if necessary.
- ✓ If the home has gutters, then check to make sure that gutters and downspouts are cleaned out and free of debris, as well as properly secured to the house. Keep in mind that the discharge of the downspouts should be a minimum of 3 feet from the home.

## **Semi-annually or seasonally (spring and fall)**

- ✓ Change the batteries in your smoke detector twice a year. Fire experts suggest changing the batteries when you change your clocks at the beginning and end of Daylight Savings Time. Or choose two family birthdays that are about 6 months apart.
- ✓ Draining a gallon or two of water from your hot water heater at least twice a year can extend its life expectancy.
- ✓ Clean out your roof gutters. Particularly don't let the gutters get clogged with leaves. General recommendation is twice a year in the spring and fall.
- ✓ Trim shrubs and trees so that they clear the foundation, exterior walls, and roof of the house. Shrubbery that's too close to the house can promote the growth of mildew, mold, and algae, particularly during warmer weather. Root growth can damage foundations. Limbs can scrape paint on siding and trim.
- ✓ Clean leaves and trash out from under decks and porches. Pull mulch away from foundation walls.
- ✓ Check and service lawn care equipment in spring before you need it.

## **Annually**

- ✓ Have your heating and cooling system(s) serviced.
- ✓ If you have a wood-burning fireplace or stove, check the chimney and have it cleaned if there is any creosote or soot build-up. Check the soundness of the mortar at the same time.
- ✓ Inspect, repair and reseal tile grout in bathrooms, kitchens, and any other areas.
- ✓ Make a quick inspection of the exterior of the house. Check the foundation for cracking, blocked vents, and leaks. Check caulking around doors and windows. Check paint for peeling, cracking, fading or blistering.
- ✓ Check the roof for leaks. You do not necessarily have to get on the roof, but can inspect the underside of the roof in the attic for any signs of leaking. If you spot any, it's probably time to call a professional.

## **Prevention is the Best Approach**

Although we've all heard it many times, nothing could be more true than the old cliché "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Preventative maintenance is the best way to keep your home in great shape. It also reduces the risk of unexpected repairs and improves the odds of selling your house at fair market value, when the time comes. Please feel free to contact our office should you have any questions regarding the operation or maintenance of your home.

***Enjoy your home !!!***