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# Handyman Homeowner Checklist

**JANUARY** – Test smoke detectors, carbon dioxide detectors, and fire extinguishers to make sure they are active and operating correctly. Change batteries at least once a year and check the expiration date on fire extinguishers to make sure they are ready for use.

**FEBRUARY** – Have your chimney inspected every few years especially if you regularly burn natural wood logs. If the walls accumulate more than 1/8" of residue you will probably need to get it cleaned. I recently found that I was burning wood logs in a fireplace that was only meant for gas logs causing odors in the house. A good chimney sweep can clean it up and determine whether your chimney is meant for wood, gas or both.

**MARCH** – With summer on the way, it is a great time to check all the vents for optimum air efficiency. Caulk your vents to the wall or ceiling to save energy. Make sure and change the A/C filter once a month to keep the air clean. Your stove hood filter also needs cleaning regularly, as well as ceiling fans.

**APRIL** – To prevent leaks and keep the weather outside, you can check and maintain the caulk around windows on the exterior of your home. Also, inspect the weather stripping around exterior doors by looking to see if it is worn or if the sun is peering through. If so, new weather stripping may be in order.

**MAY** – According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, it is critical that we clean our dryer duct regularly to prevent household fires. In addition to cleaning the lint screen every time the dryer is used, clean the exhaust duct and dryer vent, which should be a semi-rigid metal. Also, clean lint behind the dryer as often as needed.

**JUNE** – Drain the hot water heater. Remove sediment from the bottom of the tank so that it does not solidify and damage the tank and shorten its life.

**JULY** – If your home is not cooling like it should, here are some things to consider. Check the amount of insulation in your attic, the more you have, up to 12 inches, the better. Make sure your soffit vents are clear and that you have enough vents to circulate air through your attic. Lastly install attic fans, either solar, manual, or both to keep air circulating in the attic. When you reduce the temperature in your attic by maintaining air flow and insulating from the heat and cold you will see great results.

**AUGUST** – Garage Doors need maintenance too! If your door is squeaking and noisy, it may need oil. Oil the chain as well as the door to keep it running smoothly and quietly. Use a lubricant made for a garage door.

**SEPTEMBER** – Look for cracks and holes in house siding or paint and replace caulk at wood joints or siding. Scrape and re-paint where needed. Replace wood if it is soft. Exterior maintenance can be kept to a minimum if it is done on a regular basis.

**OCTOBER** – Clean the condenser coils. Dusty condenser coils cause a refrigerator to work harder; which translates into bigger energy bills and a shorter life expectancy for the fridge – not good. To prevent this from happening, use a vacuum or broom to remove dust build up from the coils every three months (once a month if you have pets).

**NOVEMBER** – With the leaves falling from the trees, it is a good time to check your gutters and clean them out. If you don't have gutters you should consider getting them. Here are some reasons why: preserve landscaping and turf, prevent water damage to siding, prevent water staining on masonry, stabilize soil around the house.

**DECEMBER** – As it gets colder, make sure and cover pipes and faucets outside when it gets below freezing. Keep drains dripping inside so that pipes do not freeze.