

Maintenance Tips for New Home Owners

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As a new home owner, you are excited about getting your house in order — setting up furnishings, rearranging and decorating. But once you have place for everything and everything in its place, it's time to get a handle on the routine maintenance you'll need to perform to help ensure that you and your family live comfortably in your new home for years to come.

Maintaining a clean home is one way to ensure its longevity. Here are some tips for properly maintaining some of the systems in your new home:

Heating and Cooling Systems

- Late summer or early fall are the ideal times to do an annual inspection and cleaning of these systems.
- Change or wash the filters every three months.
- If you have a gas furnace, keep your pilot light burning during the summer to help keep the furnace dry and prevent corrosion.
- Registers help regulate the flow of air and maintain the desired temperature in your home. Keep registers closed in rooms you don't use to save on cooling/heating costs.

Plumbing

- Every member of your family should know where the intake valves are located. Label each one.
- If any of your appliances develop a leak, inspect your drain trap. A partially clogged drain can cause overflow. Use a plunger or a plumber's snake to unclog the drain. If you need to, use boiling water to help unclog a partially opened drain. Call a plumber if these techniques don't work.
- A worn washer, a loose part in a faucet or steam in a hot water pipe are generally the causes of a noisy pipe. Do not hesitate to repair the noise — vibrations can follow the noise and lead to leaks.

Gutters and Downspouts

- Clear away leaves, tree limbs and other debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Turn the downspouts away from your home's foundation.
- Every four to six years, paint gutters that are not made of aluminum or vinyl to help prevent rust.

Remember to read the instruction manual for every appliance in your new home. The manuals provide recommended cleaning and maintenance schedules. Also familiarize yourself with any warranties you have on both the house and its systems. Some warranties may be voided if problems arise because of failure to perform routine maintenance.

For more information about taking care of your new home, contact the Springfield Area Home Builders Association at (217) 698-4941 or visit www.springfieldareaHBA.com