

Marlette's Home Maintenance Guide

This maintenance guide is designed to help you care for your home. This guide should be used at least twice each year as a checklist to maintain your home. *This guide is intended as a basic manual for the care of your home only and is not intended as a comprehensive maintenance plan.* Early discovery and correction of a potential problem can save thousands of dollars in the long term care of your property. If during the care of your home, you find something unfamiliar to you or beyond your scope of expertise, you should contact a qualified expert to further advise you.



	SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	SERVICE NOTES
<i>Chimney</i>					
Inspect the outside of the chimney for loose bricks, stones, deteriorated or cracked mortar joints, or if stucco look for cracks or loose sections.		✓			
Check Chimney flashing for leaks.		✓			
Inspect interior of chimney for creosote and soot build-up.		✓			
Check chimney caps for broken or loose sections and for obstructions in the chimney.		✓			
Inspect metal chimney for excessive rust, missing caps, and loose parts.		✓			
<i>Gutters</i>					
Check for damaged gutters, gutter hangers (or fasteners) and downspouts.	✓	✓			
Remove debris in gutters and downspouts. A wire snake or flushing the downspout with a garden hose could help remove debris from elbows.	✓	✓			
Check gutter alignment or slope to make sure rain water collects properly and diverts water away from the house.	✓	✓			
Monitor for open gutter seams or rust holes. Caulk openings when possible and replace damaged sections.	✓	✓			
Install or clean wire strainers over downspout opening to prevent clogs.	✓	✓			

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<i>Roof</i>					
SHINGLE ROOF Check for damaged, loose, or missing shingles. Especially watch ridge shingles and where downspouts discharge on roof surfaces.	✓	✓			
FLAT ROOF Check for blisters, bubbles, open seams and bald areas. If the roof is a gravel surface built-up roof, check for areas of gravel erosion and be sure any black edges are painted or coated to protect from sun damage.	✓	✓			
TILE ROOF Check for loose and broken tiles and replace as necessary.	✓	✓			
Check flashing for damage.	✓	✓			
Cut back any vegetation away from roof surfaces.	✓	✓			
Check fasteners that attach antennas to the house (like the guy wire fasteners) or bolts that fasten satellite dishes on roofs for possible sources of leaks.	✓	✓			
Check rafter ends for decay, soffits for stains, and fascia board for decay or rotation and repair as needed.	✓				
<i>Exposed Foundation</i>					
Check exposed foundations for movement, evidence of deterioration or excessive pooling of rainwater due to poor drainage.	✓				
Check sub area vent screens for damage.	✓				
<i>Grading</i>					
Check for grading to ensure drainage away from the house	✓				
<i>Exterior Walls</i>					
MASONRY WALLS Check for deteriorate bricks and mortar voids. If there is a brick façade, caulk joints where it attaches to siding.	✓				



	SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	SERVICE NOTES
<i>Exterior Walls</i> (continued)					
STUCCO WALLS Check for cracking and separating.	✓				
WOOD WALLS Check for damaged and wood-to-soil contact.	✓				
METAL, VINYL, CEMENT SHINGLE Check for loose or missing components.	✓				
ALL WALLS Check for settling, buckling and other evidence of movement.	✓				
<i>Vegetation</i>					
Keep all vegetation clear of wall surfaces by 6 to 12 inches.		✓			
<i>Trim</i>					
Check trim for damage and paint condition. Caulk trim joints as needed.	✓				
<i>Windows & Doors</i>					
Check for broken glass or damaged screens.	✓				
Check all window glazing for loose putty.	✓				
Clean windows.				✓	
Check weather stripping for tight fit. Replace where damaged.		✓			
Check caulking where windows, doors, and trim intersects with wall surfaces.		✓			
Remove debris from all foundation window and door wells.			✓		
Check door hardware and lubricate as needed.	✓	✓			
OVERHEAD GARAGE DOORS Keeps tracks clean. Lubricate hinges, rollers, wheels or ball bearings with lubricant prescribe by the manufacturer.			✓		



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<i>Porches & Decks</i>					
Check all components for rot and insect infestation.	✓	✓			
Check railings and steps for stability and loose components.	✓				
Repaint or stain all areas as required.	✓				
<i>Grounds & Yards</i>					
Check other wood structures for rot or insect infestation.	✓	✓			
Check all driveways and sidewalks for cracking, settling, or uplifting. Some of these conditions can pose tripping hazards or direct surface water to the structure. Determine the cause and repair as needed	✓	✓			
<i>Interior Foundation Walls</i>					
As viewed from the basement or crawl area, check foundation walls for evidence of deterioration, movement or dampness. Patch all cracks and voids in the foundation wall. Date the patches to help determine further movement. Note: <i>Minor foundation wall dampness may be normal in older foundations. This generally results in slow surface deterioration known as spalling.</i>			✓		



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<i>Wood Framing</i>					
Check all exposed wood structural components for evidence of rot or insect infestation. This is usually only possible to observe from the basement or crawl area. Pay special attention to the vicinity of baths, kitchens, wood framed porches, and where water can enter.			✓		
<i>Surface Cracks Walls & Ceilings</i>					
Check all interior walls and ceilings for surface cracks. Minor cracks due to normal structure settlement is to be expected. Larger cracks that enlarge from year to year or wall bulges that increase may be an indication of significant movement. If this is identified, consult a structural engineer.			✓		
Check walls and ceilings for evidence of water stains. If stains noted, determine the source of stains.			✓		
Check behind drapes, in closets and other areas for evidence of condensation or mildew. This may indicate high humidity levels or moisture penetration. In some cases, this can be caused by a lack of exterior wall insulation.				✓	
<i>Door Frames</i>					
Check door frames for squareness (which may rarely exist in older homes). A change in the operation of the door may indicate significant structural movement (in some older homes doors move seasonally and only seem to fit about half the year). If major movement occurs in a short period of time, review by a structural engineer be necessary.			✓		



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<i>Windows</i>					
Check windows for condensation. If windows condensate, maintain the paint on any wood sashes or window sills to prevent decay. Upgrading to dual-paned windows can reduce condensation.				✓	
Check dual-paned windows. If condensation between the panes is apparent, windows would require replacement to clear the view.			✓	✓	
<i>Attic</i>					
Check for water stains on the underside of roof sheathing. This will not be possible visually with the underside of wood shingles. They often look wet when bone dry.	✓	✓			
Check for decay on wood members. Pay special attention around vents in the attic and openings in the roof such as vent penetrations.	✓	✓			
Check to determine that insulation is not wet.	✓	✓			
Check to insure that roof vents are free of birds nests and that all vents are in good condition.	✓	✓			
<i>Main Electrical Panel</i>					
Check main panel for rust or water marks which may indicate water penetration. Note: <i>Do not remove any screws or covers. This should only be done by a qualified electrician.</i>			✓		
BREAKERS Flip all breakers to off and then on to ensure that no breaker has seized and to ensure proper function. Note : <i>When you first move in, check that breakers are marked to correspond to rooms or appliances, which they service.</i>	✓	✓			



	SPRING	FALL	ANNUALLY	AS NEEDED	SERVICE NOTES
<i>Main Electrical Panel</i> (continued)					
<p>FUSES</p> <p>Hand tighten all fuses.</p> <p>Note: <i>When you first move in, check that fuses are marked to correspond to rooms or appliances, which they service.</i></p> <p>Note: <i>Keep a supply of new fuses near the electrical panel. Use fuses that are 15 amps if not sure which size fuse to use.</i></p>	✓	✓			
<i>Indoor Wiring</i>					
<p>Check condition of all lamp cords, appliance cords, extension cords and plugs. Replace as first sign of wear.</p> <p>Note: <i>If you experience any tingling sensation from handling an appliance or cord, disconnect and repair immediately.</i></p>			✓		
<p>Note: <i>If fuses blow or circuit breakers trip frequently, contact a qualified electrician to determine the cause and make necessary repairs.</i></p>					
<p>GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER</p> <p>Test GFCI plug outlets monthly to by pushing the test button on the outlet. Check the bottom left hand corner of the outlet. If there is no picture of a pad lock with a lightening bolt in it, we recommend getting a new GFCI outlet.</p>				✓	
<i>Exterior Wiring</i>					
<p>Check all wires leading to the house to make sure that they are not loose or frayed.</p>	✓	✓			
<p>Check to make sure that trees and other vegetation are in contact with outside wiring systems. Use only a professional arborist when having wires cut away from electrical service lines.</p>	✓	✓			
<p>Check to make sure that all exterior outlets have weather tight protective covers. If not already established, we recommend exterior outlets be upgraded to GFCI outlets.</p>		✓			



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<i>Supply Plumbing System</i>					
Check exposed plumbing supply lines for signs of leaks.	✓				
Repair all leaking or dripping faucets.				✓	
Note: <i>Winterizing maintenance was omitted. For information consult a home maintenance publication.</i>					
<i>Waste Plumbing System</i>					
Check exposed drain plumbing lines for leaks.		✓			
Check and clean all basement and exterior drains as needed.	✓			✓	
Check slow drains and clean as needed.				✓	
If applicable, clean septic tanks as needed.				✓	
<i>Fixtures</i>					
If applicable, check sump pump operation. Check screen and/or sump well for debris or dirt and cleans as needed.	✓	✓			
Repair continuously running toilets.				✓	
Check for leakage around or under toilet bowls, sinks, showers, and tubs.			✓		
Check caulking around all bathroom and kitchen fixtures, repair as necessary.			✓		
Check lawn sprinkler system for leaky valves and exposed lines.	✓				
<i>Water Heater</i>					
PRESSURE RELIEF VALVE: Before testing the pressure relief valve, be sure the discharge pipe is properly installed and terminated to the exterior of the building. Manually check the pressure relief valve to ensure the valve at the top of the water heater tank is not seizing. Wear gloves and be sure the valve returns to its original position.	✓	✓			



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<i>Water Heater</i> (continued)					
HOT WATER HEATER TANK: Drain hot water heater to remove accumulated sludge and sediment from the bottom of the tank. A drain cap may be necessary to close the drain bib. They often leak after use. Note: <i>Consult tank manufacturer for proper draining procedures.</i>			✓		
<i>Forced Air Heating</i>					
Check air filters on conventional systems for dust and dirt (to keep air moving freely and to prevent airborne dirt from circulating through the house). Clean with vacuum or replace. Change filters at least every three months (during months of furnace operation).				✓	
Check electronic air filters for dust and dirt and clean by following manufacturer's instructions (Every 2 to 3 months).				✓	
Clean dirt and dust from around furnace area and grill grills and ducts. Note: <i>Noisy blower noises should be brought to the attention of a qualified heating system contractor.</i>		✓			
Note: <i>Humidifiers, dehumidifiers, oil furnaces, and boilers are not addressed in this maintenance guide. For more information consult a qualified HVAC (heating venting and air conditioning) expert.</i>					
HEAT EXCHANGER: Due to the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning, establish a heat exchanger inspection schedule with a qualified heating expert.				✓	
If gas odors are detected, contact the gas company immediately.				✓	
The furnace should be serviced by a qualified HVAC professional. The furnace should be checked for loose or corroded components every 2 to 3 years.				✓	



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<i>Electric Heat</i>					
Check electric baseboard heaters to ensure adequate clearance from combustible materials. Be sure no electrical cords are draped over these heaters or too close to these heaters. Check Frequently.				✓	
Check with manufacturer's user's guide for proper maintenance.				✓	
<i>Wood Stoves</i>					
Check chimneys and flues for creosote build-up and clean as needed.	✓				
Check clearance from combustibles around wood stove and obtain safe distances as per manufacturer specifications.	✓	✓			
Clean firebox and check grate for damage.	✓	✓			
<i>Air Conditioner</i>					
Clean or replace filters (usually located in the furnace or cold air return).	✓				
Remove debris from compressor (located in outdoor cabinet). Be sure the power to the unit is off during this maintenance procedure.	✓				
Flush evaporator drain lines.	✓				
For information on maintaining air conditioner room units or whole house fans, consult the manufacturer.				✓	
<i>Safety Equipment</i>					
Test smoke alarms by pressing the test button. We recommend replacing the batteries when you change your clocks.	✓	✓			
Check fire extinguisher gauges to be sure it is charged. Be sure the pin is firmly in place and intact. We recommend ABC type extinguishers.	✓	✓			

Well I just tried my best to ruin your weekends for a while. This checklist is not exhaustive. For more information, there are several books on general home repair that can lend additional insight.



JAY MARLETTE
PROFESSIONAL HOME INSPECTIONS FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED

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