

## HOME AND MAINTENANCE

# TIPS & TRICKS



### HEATING/AC

- Make sure the filter is clean or has been changed recently.
- Check to make sure the breaker has not been tripped - reset breaker by turning it off and back on.
- Check to see if the wall thermostat needs new batteries.

### APPLIANCES

- Check to make sure the breaker has not been tripped - reset breaker by turning it off and back on.
- Refrigerator: Check temperature settings to make sure they have not been changed.
- Dishwasher: Your dishwasher should be cleaned periodically – run an empty dishwasher with 1 cup of baking soda as well as 1 ½ cups of vinegar. Make sure that debris is removed from the bottom of the dishwasher, especially around the drain filter. If the dishwasher is leaking it may be due to blockage in the line – pouring drain cleaning in the garbage disposal side of the sink may clear the blockage.
- Garbage Disposal: **MAKE SURE THE SWITCH IS OFF** before sticking your hand inside – check for debris blocking the blade – push the reset button located at the bottom of

the unit (red button located in the center). If the unit makes a humming noise but does not turn on, use an Allen wrench (hexagon shaped key) at the bottom of the disposal unit – turn the key back and forth until it turns easily – turn disposal back on to confirm it is working.

- If your dryer doesn't work as quickly as it used to, lint could be the culprit. Buildup not only affects efficiency, it also increases your risk of fire. To clean your ducts, first you'll need some muscle to move your dryer away from the wall. Then you just need a vacuum. Unplug the dryer, disconnect the ductwork, and vacuum out the ducts as well as you can.

### CLOGGED DRAIN

- First try plunging the toilet/sink/tub.
- For slow or clogged drains, use a drain cleaner such as Liquid Plumber or Drain-o.
- If drain is clogged with hair – use a drain snake hair remover – these are inexpensive and can be found at most stores. It will save a ton of time and hassle if you remove the hair from the drains on a regular basis.

### SMOKE DETECTORS BEEPING

- Put new batteries in the detectors.

***Make sure you know where the panel box and shut off valves are. If there is a water leak, shut off the water valves immediately!***

## EXTERIOR OF THE HOME

- Check for loose or leaky gutters. Improper drainage can lead to water in the basement or crawl space. Make sure downspouts drain away from the foundation and are clear and free of debris.
- From the ground, examine roof shingles to see if any were lost or damaged during winter. If your home has an older roof covering, you may want to start a budget for replacement. The summer sun can really damage roof shingles.
- Check outside hose faucets for freeze damage. Turn the water on and place your thumb or finger over the opening. If you can stop the flow of water, it is likely the pipe inside the home is damaged and will need to be replaced. While you're at it, check the garden hose for dry rot.
- Examine putty and caulk lines around exterior windows and doors, and ensure that weather stripping creates a good seal.

## LANDSCAPING

- Low areas in the yard or next to the foundation should be filled with compacted soil. Spring rains can cause yard flooding, which can lead to foundation flooding and damage. Also, when water pools in these low areas in summer, it creates a breeding ground for insects.

- Check your gas and battery-powered lawn equipment to make sure it is ready for summer use. Clean equipment and sharp cutting blades will make yardwork easier.
- Trim plants every spring and fall as needed to keep them looking good and to prevent them from damaging the home. You should be able to walk around the entire foundation of the home with ease. Overgrown trees and shrubs obscure a house and can detract from the property's curb appeal.

## DRIVEWAYS AND WALKWAYS

- Inspect concrete slabs for signs of cracks or movement. All exterior slabs except pool decks should drain away from the home's foundation. Fill cracks with a concrete crack filler or silicone caulk. When weather permits, power-wash and then seal the concrete.

***Home is where the heart is, so it's hard to look at your house with an objective eye.***

***It's a good idea to bring in friends, family or professionals now and then to spot curb appeal issues that you otherwise might not see.***

