

# Home Maintenance



## *Important Resources*

Minnesota Department  
of Commerce  
[www.commerce.state.mn.us](http://www.commerce.state.mn.us)  
800-657-3978/651-296-4026

Building Codes & Standards  
Minnesota Department  
of Administration  
[www.admin.state.mn.us](http://www.admin.state.mn.us)  
651-296-4639

Minnesota Attorney  
General's Office  
[www.ag.state.mn.us](http://www.ag.state.mn.us)  
800-657-3787/651-296-3353

Your home is a complex machine constructed from more than 3,000 individual components. Just like your car, it needs to be maintained regularly to keep it operating at peak performance, and avoid preventable problems down the road.

Below is a list of important maintenance issues that should be addressed regularly, and inside there is a maintenance checklist to get you started. Some maintenance items may require hiring a professional service company.

- **New homes in Minnesota are now required to have mechanical ventilation systems. Ask your builder what type of ventilation system you have and how to maintain the system.**
- **If your home is too humid in the summer and too dry in the winter, your ventilating system may be running excessively. However, the ventilation must not be reduced to the point of compromising indoor air quality. Check the owners manual and the Department of Commerce website for more information.**
- **Clean filters in your furnace, air conditioner, kitchen exhaust fan, air cleaner, and ventilation system to manufacturer's instructions.**
- **Test smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers to ensure that they are operating properly.**
- **If there is more than a minor buildup of snow on your roof, the snow needs to be removed to prevent ice dams from forming, which can cause damage to your roof. Any ice buildup on your roof should be removed as soon as possible. If snow is left to accumulate, the weight of the snow may damage your home. Certain roof designs require more maintenance than others.**
- **Keep gutters and downspouts free of leaves and debris. Make sure that your landscaping is sloped away from the foundation.**
- **Don't dig until you call Gopher State One at 800-252-1166 or 651-454-0002 to locate underground utility lines.**
- **Check caulk around windows & doors, and re-caulk when necessary to prevent water damage.**
- **Vacuum the ducts behind warm air and return air grilles. Don't obstruct grilles with furniture or other items.**
- **Shut off exterior faucets and drain pipes before temperatures drop to freezing.**
- **Know where your main water shut-off valve is located and how to use it. Never leave your home without heat during cold weather as water pipes may freeze and burst.**

# *Maintenance Schedule*

***This Maintenance Schedule highlights maintenance issues for all homes.  
Get additional maintenance information specific to your home from your builder.***

While your new home has many features and benefits, it is not maintenance free. Its warranties are in place to guard against defective materials or workmanship, not to take the place of routine maintenance.

All building permits that were issued on new homes after April 15, 2000 are required to have a residential mechanical ventilation system. Ask your builder what kind of ventilation system you have and how you should maintain your ventilation system for proper operation.

During its first year or two a new home goes through a curing process as the various components and materials adjust to each other and to their new environment. Be extra vigilant with maintenance during this time.

Check for and wipe-up any condensation at windows and around fixtures in bath. If this occurs it usually will be in the first year curing process or occasionally due to excessive moisture from cooking or frequent showering.

Furnace and air conditioning filters need to be checked and replaced regularly. During your home's first two years after construction check them every month or two, then every two months or according to the manufacturer's directions.

Fill out this table and use it as a quick reference for major appliances. Remember that improper maintenance on your part can negate the warranty on many fixtures. Please consult a professional for help with maintenance tasks you are unfamiliar with.

**Builder** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Ventilation System** \_\_\_\_\_

APPLIANCES/HEATING/VENTILATION				
<i>ITEM</i>	<i>SERIAL #</i>	<i>MODEL #</i>	<i>DATE SERVICED</i>	<i>OTHER INFORMATION</i>
Air-Conditioning				
Furnace				
Water Heater				
Mechanical Ventilation				
Exhaust Fan				
Fresh Air Intake				
Damper Control				
Fireplace				
Clothes Dryer				
Clothes Washer				
Microwave				
Kitchen Exhaust & Fan				
Refrigerator				
Range/Stove/Cooktop				
Dishwasher				



## January/February

- Clean or replace furnace filter
- Clean or replace air-cleaner
- Check and clean mechanical ventilation system (HRV)
- Clean snow from air intakes, exhaust and meters
- Clean range hood filter
- Remove snow from roof to prevent ice dams
- Clean and check sump pump and pit
- Inspect pressure and temperature valve on water heater
- Clean faucet aerators and turn on infrequently used faucets and put water in floor drains to maintain the trap's water barrier

## March/April

- Check and clean mechanical ventilation system (HRV)
- Clean or replace furnace filter
- Clean snow from air intakes, exhaust and meters
- Remove snow from roof to prevent ice dams
- Check gutters and downspouts and clean if needed
- Inspect basement/crawl space for seepage/leakage
- Maintain proper grades for drainage throughout property
- Be sure to check for settling after spring thaw
- Check and repair any screen damage
- Inspect roof for damage and make repairs when necessary
- Adjust thermostat for season change, check humidity levels to prevent excessive moisture

## May/June

- Check and clean mechanical ventilation system (HRV)
- Clear air intakes, exhaust and meters of debris, nests, etc.
- Check gutters and downspouts and clean if needed
- Open outside hose connection
- Check and clean central air conditioning system
- Check landscaping sprinklers to ensure proper alignment (do not let them soak your siding or foundation)
- Replace air conditioning filters monthly or as recommended by the manufacturer
- Inspect pressure and temperature valve on water heater
- Clean A/C condenser
- Maintain proper grades for drainage throughout property

## July/August

- Clear air intakes, exhaust and meters of debris, nests, etc.
- Check gutters and downspouts and clean if needed
- Check exterior finishes
- Check and clean mechanical ventilation system (HRV)
- Air out damp basements on dry days or use dehumidifier
- Have furnace (heating system) serviced
- Check hot water heater for mineral buildup, drain, refill
- Check and repair interior caulking and grout on tile in showers and baths
- Check and repair all exterior caulking and weather stripping, especially around windows and entry doors
- Seal coat and repair asphalt driveway as needed
- Replace air conditioning filters monthly or as recommended by the manufacturer
- Clean A/C condenser

## September/October

- Check fireplace and chimney; service or clean if needed
- Clean range hood filter
- Check and clean mechanical ventilation system (HRV)
- Clear air intakes, exhaust and meters of debris, nests, etc.
- Do safety checks: smoke detector, fire escape routes, fire extinguisher, door and window locks
- Check gutters and downspouts and clean if needed
- Check roofing and flashing for signs of wear or damage
- Check roof vents/ soffit vents
- Close outside hose connection and drain
- Winterize landscaping and blow out irrigation system
- Inspect pressure and temperature valve on water heater
- Maintain proper grades for drainage throughout property
- Adjust thermostat for season change, check humidity levels to prevent excessive moisture
- Clean dryer vent

## November/December

- Check attic for signs of moisture
- Clean or replace furnace filter
- Check and clean mechanical ventilation system (HRV)
- Check exhaust fans
- Clear air intakes, exhaust and meters of snow, debris, etc.
- Remove snow from roof to prevent ice dams
- Check adjustment of door thresholds
- Check garage floor for cracks-seal & caulk

**It is important to remember to perform these routine maintenance services on your home every year.  
Please make copies of this list and use it every year to make your home maintenance tasks a quick and easy process.  
Not all items apply to all homes.**

## *Home Warranty Law*

Minnesota's home warranty statute (327A.01-327A.07) creates warranties for new homes and home improvements. The statutory warranties provide the following coverages:

### **One Year Period from Warranty Date:**

The dwelling shall be free from defects caused by faulty workmanship and defective materials due to noncompliance with building standards;

### **Two Year Period from Warranty Date:**

The dwelling shall be free from defects caused by faulty installation of plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling systems due to noncompliance with building standards; and

### **Ten Year Period from Warranty Date:**

During the ten year period from and after the warranty date, the dwelling shall be free from major construction defects due to noncompliance with building standards.

The statute defines the term "major construction defects" as meaning actual damage to the load-bearing portion of the dwelling, including damage due to the subsidence, expansion or lateral movement of the soil, which affects the load-bearing function and which vitally affects or is eminently likely to vitally affect use of the dwelling for residential purposes. The term does not include damage due to movement of soil caused by flood, earthquake or other natural disaster.

Warranty coverage under the statute runs from the "warranty date" which is the earlier of the following: The date of the buyer's first occupancy of the dwelling; or the date on which the buyer takes legal or equitable title to the dwelling. A warranty claim must be brought within two years of the date of discovery of the breach of warranty. If a builder breaches a statutory warranty, a buyer has a cause of action against the builder for damages or for specific performance. For the complete Minnesota Home Warranty Law, go to [www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/327A](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/327A).

## *Residential Building Contractors Licensing Law Overview*

The Department of Commerce licenses residential building contractors, remodelers, and roofers. The Department requires that certain standards of education and professional conduct be maintained to obtain and retain a license. Licenses are required for all residential building contractors and residential remodelers who contract with a homeowner to construct or improve dwellings by offering more than one special skill.

The Commerce Department has the power to investigate consumer complaints and take administrative disciplinary action against contractors who are proven to have violated state laws and rules. If you have a complaint:

- E-mail the department at [enforcement.commerce@state.mn.us](mailto:enforcement.commerce@state.mn.us)
- Call the Enforcement Division of the Department of Commerce at 651-296-2488 or 1-800-657-3602.

Complaints must be submitted in writing before an investigation can begin. In the letter of complaint, be sure to:

- Write the details of the dispute and include as many facts as possible.
- Include daytime phone and your mailing address.
- Attach copies of any documents to support your complaint, such as printed ads, applications or checks.

### **Contractors Recovery Fund**

If a homeowner hires a licensed contractor who breaches the contract between the contractor and the homeowner, the homeowner may take legal action and obtain a judgement against the contractor. If the homeowner is unable to collect on this judgement from the contractor, the homeowner may be eligible to have part or all of the judgement paid by the Minnesota Contractors Recovery Fund.

The Contractors Recovery Fund is used to compensate consumers who suffer a loss due to a contractor's actions including fraudulent, deceptive or dishonest practices, conversion of funds, or failure to perform. The total amount that can be paid out on one licensed contractor is \$75,000. For the complete Contractors Recovery Fund information, go to [www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/326](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/326).

*This information was prepared by the Builders Association of Minnesota to provide an overview only and does not constitute legal advice.*

*For more information and helpful links, please visit the Builders Association of Minnesota online at [www.bamn.org](http://www.bamn.org)*