

Interior maintenance

Inspection checklist

Make a thorough inspection of your home inside and out once or twice a year. Detecting and correcting repair problems before they become emergencies can save time, worry, and often money. Use the following list when you inspect the interior of the house. (For an exterior checklist, see p. 164.)

1. **Attic:** Look for evidence of roof leaks, also openings that permit entry of bats or other pests; inspect insulation, rafters, ventilation openings, chimney, and side walls.
2. **Windows:** Check for difficulty of operation, cracked or broken panes, sash cords or chains in need of replacement, faulty or hard-to-operate locks, worn weatherstripping.
3. **Bathroom:** Note dripping faucets, leaking shower heads, malfunctioning flush valves, inadequate hot-water supply.
4. **Walls and ceilings:** Examine condition of painted surfaces and wallpaper; look for cracks, holes, or bulges in plaster, signs of loose tape on wallboard.
5. **Floors:** Inspect for loose, creaking boards, worn areas, cracked and chipped baseboards and moldings, broken or missing floor tiles.
6. **Staircase:** Note loose, squeaking treads, shaky handrails and posts, cracked or broken balusters.
7. **Radiators:** Check leaking valves; bleed off air at start of heating season.
8. **Air conditioners:** Take out and clean filters before warm weather; cover exterior in winter.
9. **Doors:** Inspect for sticking or sagging; examine locks and chains; renew worn weatherstripping.
10. **Fireplace:** Check dampers, firebox, hearth, grate, andirons, screen, mantelpiece.
11. **Kitchen:** Examine appliance wiring; clean the ventilator fan and remove accumulations of dust and grease.
12. **Doorbells:** Test all sonic apparatus—chimes, buzzers, burglar alarms.
13. **Furnace:** Check for leaks in pipes, flue, firebox; examine damper; check blower belt and blades; replace filter; oil motor; test thermostat operation.
14. **Electrical system:** Look throughout the house for frayed cords, loose connections, malfunctioning switches and outlets.
15. **Plumbing:** Check drains, traps, waste pipes in basement, main water line and shutoff.
16. **Basement in general:** Look for signs of dampness, leaks, cracked or broken floors, cracked walls.

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them. You can make your window sills maintenance-free by covering them with a plastic laminate.

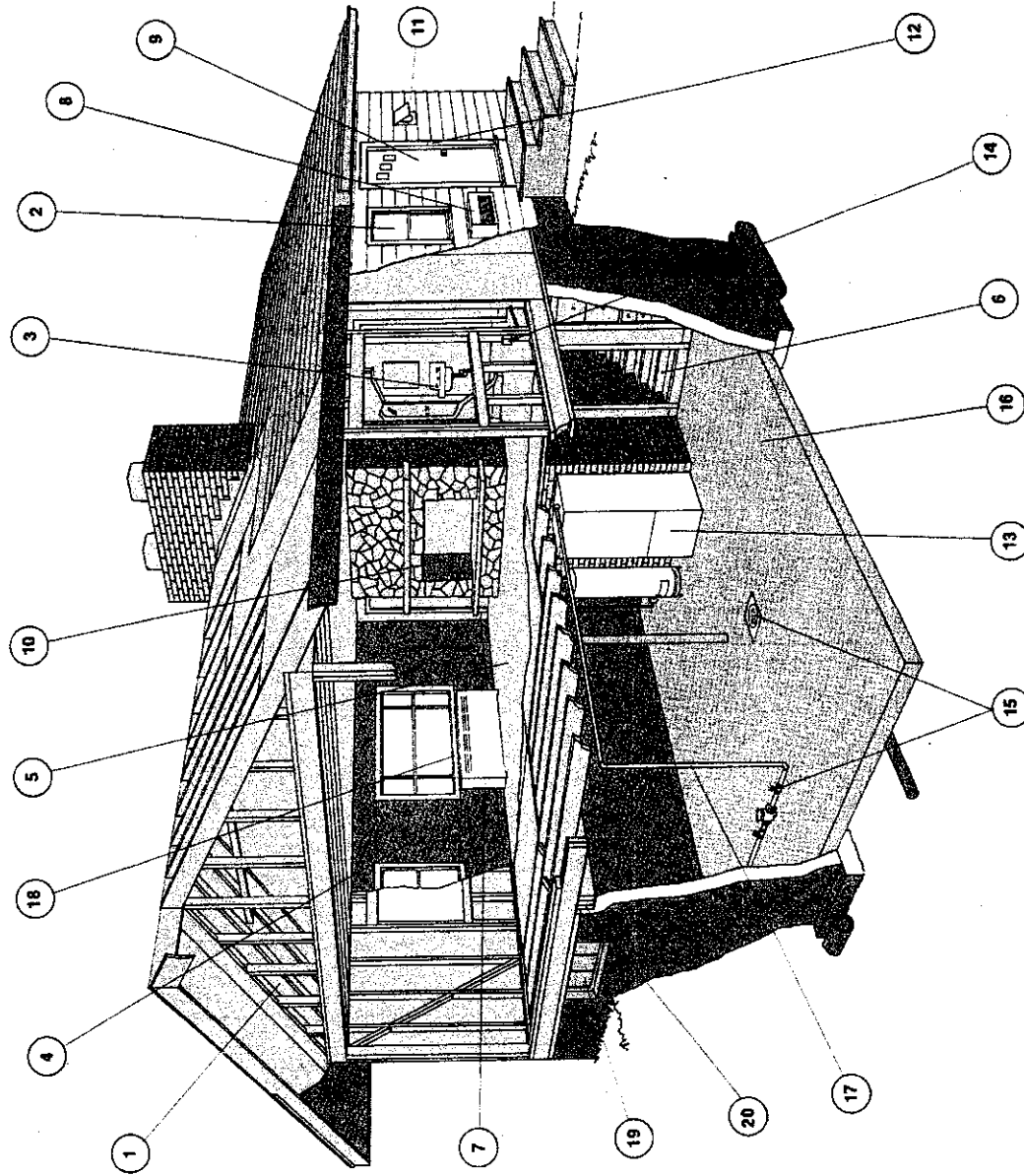
19. **Basement windows:** Those on grade, or slightly above grade, should be examined for termite damage, even if the foundation is concrete.

20. **Beams:** Make sure each beam is doing its share of the work with no visible space between a beam and the main house girder. Drive in shims if necessary.

Pay special attention to joints between floor and walls; this is where most basement leaks develop.

17. **Basement pipes:** Check all cold-water pipes in the basement. Wrap them with insulating material to prevent sweating and subsequent dripping during hot summer weather and possible freezing in winter.

18. **Window sills:** These take a beating, especially those that face the southern sun. Sand and paint



Exterior maintenance

Inspection checklist

Exterior maintenance can best be described as preventive care with the primary purpose of keeping a house weatherproof. The sensible way to assure adequate weatherproofing is not to attend haphazardly to each bit of trouble as it develops, but to conduct a regular campaign of maintenance as outlined below. If you follow the checklist faithfully, making necessary repairs at vulnerable points, you can rest assured that your house is snug in any kind of weather.

- 1. Roof:** Apply roof tar cement to loose shingles; replace missing or damaged shingles (p.166).
- 2. Flashing:** Examine for looseness between chimney, roof, and flashing. Seal with caulking compound or roof cement (p.175).
- 3. Gutters:** Remove accumulated debris; check for proper pitch and re nail if necessary; check for leaks at seams (p.170).
- 4. Downspouts:** Clean leaf strainer, if one is used; check for loose joints (p.170).
- 5. Louvers:** Should be open for ventilation but screened to keep out insects. Remove leaves; check caulking (p.182).
- 6. Roof line:** Check for separation and loose flashing (p.175).
- 7. Siding:** Renail loose siding; replace rotted areas; paint siding if required; check for carpenter ants and wasps' nests (p.181).
- 8. Rain diverter:** Make sure that it is set in the proper position. It is best to drain the downspout into a dry well (p.173).
- 9. Garage door:** Lubricate hinges and hardware; check for loose putty in windows; paint the door if necessary (p.189).
- 10. Driveway:** Chip out and fill cracks, or seal if blacktop; add gravel if needed; align curbing (p.194).
- 11. Foundations:** Check flashing and termite shield. Look for termite tunnels (p.160).
- 12. Windows:** Remove loose putty, apply new putty and paint; lubricate casement operators (p.123).
- 13. Doors:** Tighten loose hinges; rehang doors if necessary; check condition of weatherstripping; apply graphite to the lock (p.139).
- 14. Caulking:** Remove crumbling caulking; clean, and apply new caulking where doors and windows meet siding or brick (p.182).
- 15. Chimney:** Replace loose mortar; check for birds' nests; check condition of draft deflector; cover the chimney if it is not used (p.174).

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