

Home Maintenance Tips

By Rob Rogers

As a vehicle owner, preventive maintenance is second nature. We take our cars to be serviced for regular oil changes and scheduled maintenance checks. As a homeowner, we sometimes tend to wait until something goes wrong before we fix it.

Our homes are probably the biggest investment we make. With preventive maintenance and scheduled routine service calls, we can protect our investment and minimize the amount of costly repairs.

Hot Water Heater

When a hot water heater fails, the usual cause is tank corrosion. The tank develops a pinhole and leaks water, which calls for a new water heater. To maximize the life of your hot water heater, it is important to drain the sediment that forms and settles to the bottom of tank. The formation of sediment is caused, in part, by the continual heating of the water. When sediment builds up in an electric water heater, it can surround the lower heating element and cause it to fail prematurely.

Scheduled home maintenance should include flushing the hot water heater tank approximately two to four times a year. Draining off the sediment regularly from the time the water heater is new will yield the best results and add years to its life.

Gutter Cleaning

Twice a year, the gutters on your roof need to be cleaned: once before winter sets in and again right after spring. If you live in a heavily wooded area, gutter cleaning several times a year will be necessary. Causing the most problems are leaves, twigs, and seed pods (like the ones you used to peel apart and stick on your nose as a kid). When these are allowed to accumulate, they clog gutters and downspouts. During heavy downpours the rain has no place to go but over the edge of the gutter. This damages

plants below and washes away topsoil. Eventually, the constant moisture and drying out of the wood under the gutter will rot the fascia boards and require a costly repair.

Bathroom Caulking

The inevitable crack that appears between the bathtub and the wall tiles is caused by the tub being filled and emptied several times a week. The constant weight change eventually splits the plaster or grout along the joint. If left unrepaired, water damage will occur to the walls behind the tile and the floor underneath the bathtub. The cost to repair water damaged greenboard/drywall and rotted flooring and sub-flooring could reach several thousand dollars. Routine maintenance, such as recaulking intersections at the first signs of wear, can prevent these costly repairs.

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