

2022

Northern California Home Maintenance Checklist®



For a safe, healthy, and comfortable home, stay on top of home maintenance all year long.

We love living in a place as beautiful as Northern California and, although homeownership comes with a long list of chores and responsibilities, keeping your home properly maintained is well worth the effort. It's a great way to protect the value of your home, and can help save you money on future repairs and replacements. All it takes is the right set of tools, and a helpful set of general home maintenance tips — like this month-by-month checklist!

2022 Northern California Home Maintenance Checklist

Monthly

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Clean/change HVAC and air purifier filters
 - ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Deep clean kitchen, including garbage disposal and range hood
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Quarterly

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Look for leaks around toilets and sinks
 - ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Inspect grout and caulking in showers and tubs
 - ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Check for pests and look for possible entry points into your home
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Twice a Year

- ☐ ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils
 - ☐ ☐ Clean gutters and downspouts
 - ☐ ☐ Inspect roof for damaged or loose shingles
 - ☐ ☐ Wash windows and screens
 - ☐ ☐ Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
 - ☐ ☐ Inspect emergency kit and refresh or replenish supplies
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Annually

- ☐ Flush water heater
- ☐ Clean out dryer vent
- ☐ Defrost freezer
- ☐ Reseal grout
- ☐ Oil garage door coils
- ☐ Wash home exterior and touch up paint
- ☐ Check weather stripping around windows and doors
- ☐ Have chimney inspected and cleaned
- ☐ Create defensible space around home in case of fire
- ☐ Power wash and reseal deck



01

JANUARY

Resolve to start the new year on the right foot with a focus on home safety and energy efficiency.

Fire and carbon monoxide safety. First things first! Make sure your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are in good working order. Many of the latest models have a 10 year life span, making them an excellent investment in protecting your home and everyone in it. You'll want to check them again in six months.

Electrical safety. Be sure all your circuits are properly grounded. If you have breakers tripping and fuses blowing on a regular basis, have an electrician take a look.

Insulate. A single family home can lose hundreds of dollars in wasted energy each year due to improper insulation. Proper insulation slows the movement of heat between two spaces, keeping your home warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. You can purchase inexpensive insulation from your local home improvement store and fill areas where heat might be escaping — the attic is a likely suspect.

Make your home smart this year. New Year's Resolutions are for your home too! Modernize an older home and save money on your electric bill with a smart thermostat. Once it's installed, set it at a comfortable temperature that you won't be tempted to crank up during the day. At night, turn it down 10 to 15 degrees. According to the Department of Energy, it could save about 10% on your winter heating bill.

Pro Tip: Consider shopping for a combination smoke and carbon monoxide detector. You'll find both conventional (usually battery-operated) models and "smart" models, which offer alerts and other features through a smartphone app.



02

FEBRUARY

The weather is likely keeping you indoors this month, so it's a great time to tackle interior projects and get a jump on spring cleaning.

Inspect and clean dryer vent. Cleaning the duct that connects the back of your dryer to the outside vent won't only improve the unit's efficiency, it can prevent a house fire caused by lint buildup. Purchase a dryer vent cleaning kit and tackle the project in one afternoon.

Vacuum refrigerator coils. One little-known fact about your refrigerator is that cleaning the condenser coils located in the back or bottom of the appliance will save energy and keep it in prime working condition. Plan to give the coils a good vacuuming twice a year, especially if you have pets.

Clean your kitchen exhaust fans. Exhaust fans help remove steam and odors when you're cooking. They should be cleaned monthly to avoid grease buildup.

Begin planning home improvement projects. If you're considering a home remodel or improvement project later in the year when the weather improves, now is the time to start planning. Contractors book up quickly in the summer months, so begin interviewing and getting bids now so you can schedule the job to begin when you're ready. In the meantime, shop for the materials and finishes you'd like installed.

Pro Tip: AAA House Manager Members have access to licensed contractor services. We pride ourselves on clear and competitive estimates, and on sticking to proposed timelines. Plus, all pros are AAA employees or vetted trade specialists: we don't use freelancers. Give us a call at (855) 634-0334 to schedule a free consultation.



03

MARCH

This month, focus on finding and repairing issues before they become major problems.

Check for leaks. First, turn off all water usage in your home, including faucets, toilets, the dishwasher, and washing machine. Read your water meter immediately, then again after an hour or two. If the usage increased noticeably during that time, you likely have a leak and it's time for a household-wide leak inspection. Check each faucet for drips, and leaks under the sink. Perform a food coloring test on each toilet, and check the dishwasher for a defective motor, pump or seals. If you can't find the leak, it's possible that it's between your water meter and your house, which means it's time to call a professional.

Inspect your home's exterior. Winter weather, growing tree roots, and Northern California's creeping faults can cause damage when you're not looking. Start by searching for cracks in the concrete around your home, including on the driveway. Check for water pooling around the foundation as well. Any issues you find should be dealt with immediately.

Head onto the roof. Inspect your roof for signs of loose or broken shingles, even if you're not experiencing leaks in your home. Also look at the chimney for signs of wear, and plan to have a cleaning and inspection done once the weather warms up.

Tree health inspection. If you're lucky enough to have large, mature trees on your property, have them inspected by a certified arborist. They will check for signs of illness or dead branches, and catch problems before they escalate and kill a tree. A dead or dying tree poses a safety hazard to you, your home and neighboring properties.

Pro Tip: Our AAA House Manager Premier plan includes a Home Assessment — a thorough examination of your home. We follow it up with a detailed Home Health Report that will include any issues that should be addressed before they become big problems.

04

APRIL

Colorful signs of spring and the season of renewal are signals that it's time for a complete cleaning of your home, and preparations for summer should begin.

Clean the windows. Springtime is a great time to clean your exterior windows. Better yet, consider swapping out old, drafty windows for more energy efficient ones.

Prep your air conditioning. Get ahead of the heat wave by removing and either replacing or cleaning filters now. Plan to repeat each month during the season. Turn on the unit to ensure it's blowing cool air. If anything looks off, you'll be first in line before HVAC companies become swamped with requests.

Spring yard cleanup. Start by raking up any remaining leaves in the yard that survived the winter. Next, lay down mulch in your flower beds and beneath hedges to protect plants from the




summer drought, and to keep weeds at bay. Turn your outside faucets and sprinklers back on and check for damage.

Reseed the lawn. Fill in bald patches before the summer heat. Later in the spring, when the grass turns bright green again, you'll want to fertilize to promote healthy growth.

Clean the gutters. Gutters and downspouts should be cleaned twice a year, so we'll remind you again in the fall. For now, clear away any debris that may have collected during the winter to ensure that any last spring rain can flow freely away from your home's foundation.

Pro Tip: Ensure your yard's sprinkler system is working properly by turning each station on at a time. Check to make sure each sprinkler head is upright, faced in the correct direction, not being blocked by overgrown plants, and is free from clogs. Clean and tighten if needed. Once everything looks good, run a full cycle to make sure timers are set correctly. During your tests, if you notice leaks, pooling water or low water pressure, it could be a sign that underground pipes are cracked, which would need to be addressed by a professional.



05

MAY

*Outdoor weather season is here!
Now is the time to prepare for the
rising temperatures of summer.*

Give the house a bath. A good scrub will wash away winter grime. Close all windows and doors, and cover the ground and hedges with plastic sheeting. Then hit the house with the garden hose and spot-clean heavily soiled areas with TSP. Use detergent sparingly, as it can harm your plants.

Paint the exterior. Once your home's exterior is nice and clean, look for signs of peeling or chipping paint. You may need a touch-up or a fresh coat. If you plan to hire a professional, schedule the job now so the work gets done by the end of the summer.

Inspect and refinish deck. Winter was likely hard on your deck, so it's time for a little TLC. Start by sweeping it clean and removing any leaves or debris from between boards. Look for loose boards and tighten or replace the screws needed to keep them in place. Then, sprinkle water on the deck's boards. If it beads up, your deck is in good shape. If it soaks in, you may want to consider resealing.

Pool care. If you own a pool, it's time to open it for summer. You'll want to treat the water, check and change valves and filters, and inspect all the equipment before you take your first dip of the season.

Pro Tip: To touch up exterior paint, follow these steps.

Step 1: Clean with a sponge and soapy water. **Step 2:** Fill any dents or holes with spackle (use fine sandpaper first).

Step 3. Use a latex primer for proper paint adhesion. **Step 4:** Paint with the same paint originally used. **Step 5:** Let dry!



06

JUNE

With summer officially starting this month, it's time to get the house ready for the warmest season of the year.

Clean the grill. It's easy to do and your food will taste even better.

Ceiling fans. Reverse the setting on your ceiling fans to counterclockwise. This pushes the air down, creating a nice breeze.

Plan for extreme heat. Check weather stripping around windows and doors and replace if necessary to help keep the cool air in. Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes.

Start outdoor projects. Now is the time to start on any exterior projects you've been planning. Whether a new roof, landscaping, or major repairs, you should be in the clear for several months of dry weather.

Conduct pest control. Warm weather brings out (and in) bugs and pests. Block all potential entrances to attic and crawl spaces with durable materials like wire mesh or sheet metal, and seal all cracks and openings in your home's exterior, including holes for wiring. A persistent animal can widen almost any crevice or opening.

Pro Tip: To clean a gas grill, spray degreaser onto the metal grate, let sit for 5 to 10 minutes, then use a wire brush to scrub. When you see bare metal, your grill is clean. Finally, let the grill "cook" on high with the lid closed for 20 to 30 minutes to cook off any remaining residue.

07

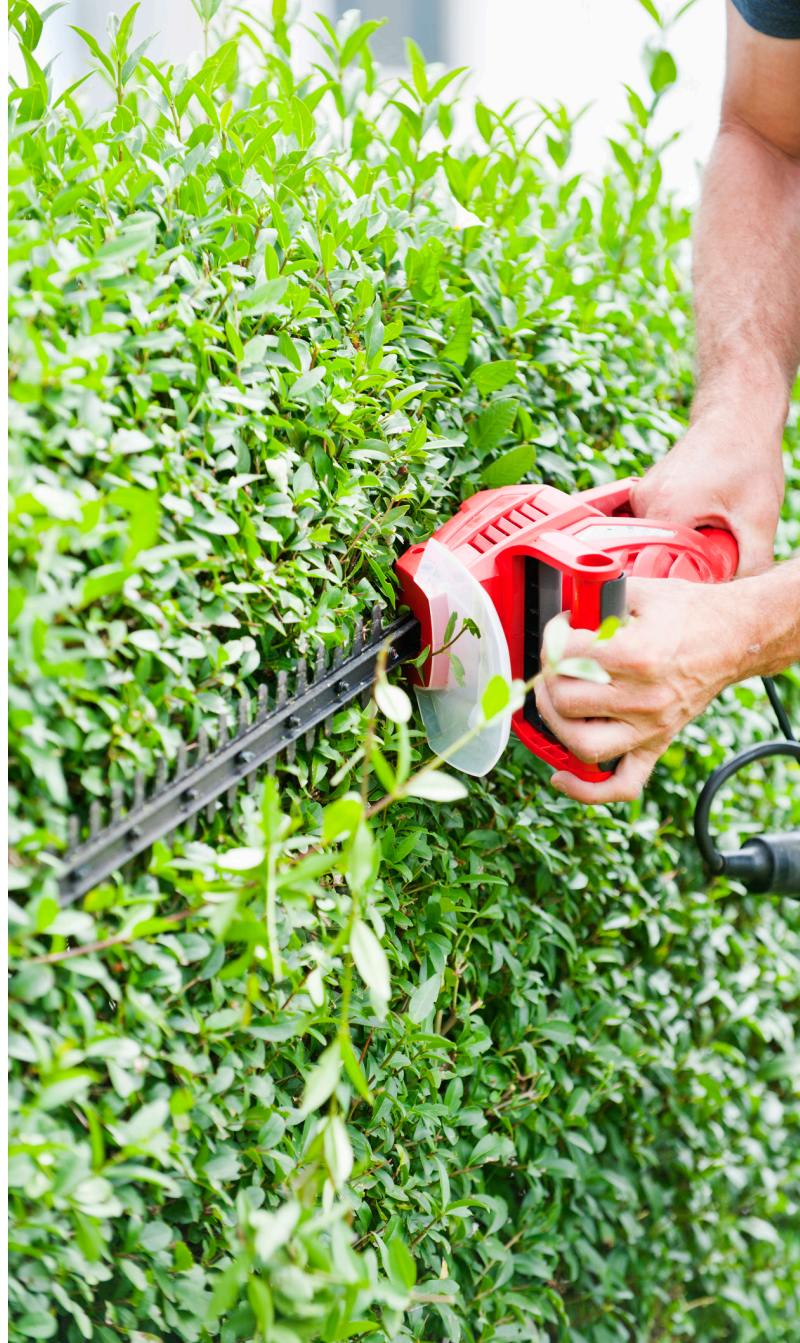
JULY

Focus this month on fire safety and prevention, as well as on making sure your household is prepared for an emergency.

Create defensible space. This is the time of year when grass, plants, and shrubs begin to dry out and create a fire risk. Remove all dead vegetation, as well as combustible material, from at least 30 feet of your home. That includes any tree branches that may be growing near or above your roof or chimney. If you live on a larger property, reduce fuel within 100 feet of your home by thinning out and pruning wildland vegetation.

Reduce fire risk indoors. Check for frayed cords and wires around your home. Clean the stove and oven to help prevent kitchen fires, and be sure you have a fire extinguisher nearby that has not expired. Check smoke detectors (for the second time this year) to ensure they're working properly. In the garage, keep all combustible materials like paint and gasoline in their original containers.

Pro Tip: AAA House Manager Classic and Premier plans include 2 hours of an Essential Seasonal Maintenance task. Choose our offering of weed and brush removal to help create defensible space and reduce fire danger around your home.



Establish a family emergency plan. What are the best escape routes from your home if there is a fire? Where will you meet if you need to evacuate quickly and not everyone is at home? Discuss the plan with everyone in the family and make sure young children know how to dial 911 if needed. Check your disaster supply kit to make sure it's fully stocked with items like batteries for flashlights, canned food, bottled water, medicines, a battery powered radio, and first-aid kit.

Consider investing in a generator. They're costly, but provide peace of mind in the event of a power outage. Portable generators can do the trick and cost less money.



08

AUGUST

Beat the heat this month by tackling indoor projects.

Repair drywall. Drywall can get damaged during the bumps and scrapes of life, but repairs can be a fairly simple DIY job. Scrape away loose debris near small holes and dents, then fill with a fast-drying spackling compound. Larger holes may need a mesh or drywall patch. Re-texturize and touch up paint as needed to complete the job.

Inspect hardware. Fix squeaky door hinges, handles, and loose locks. A squirt of WD-40 should do the trick.

Kitchen clean up. It's the heart of your home. If you're not planning a remodel this year, now is the

time to show it a little love. Start with deep cleaning appliances (including vacuuming refrigerator coils for the second time this year) and organizing cupboards. Update the faucet or lighting fixtures if needed, and do a round of touch up painting for the cabinets.

Defrost the freezer. Your freezer will run more efficiently and save on energy if it's properly defrosted. The warm weather will help move the process along quickly, just take extra care to keep food cold while the ice is melting away.

Pro Tip: As you start defrosting your freezer, use a plastic spatula to loosen the ice to prevent damaging the elements or internal surfaces. Take out all of the freezer compartments and allow them to come to room temperature before washing, so that they don't crack. To speed up defrosting, place bowls of hot water inside. Finally, wipe dry and let it run for an hour before replacing food.



09

SEPTEMBER

As summer comes to an end, it's time to start thinking about the cooler weather with a few fall preparation tasks.

Get your fire pit ready. Now that you've completed wildfire prevention tasks and the evenings are starting to cool off, it's safe to begin using your outdoor fire pit. Place it as far from your home as possible on a non-flammable surface like gravel, then use a wire mesh cover when you burn. Be sure to place ashes in a metal can.

Prep your garden for fall. Now is the time to plant perennials like peonies, columbine or hydrangea, as well as cool weather vegetables like carrots, lettuce, cabbage, and onions. Pull out the last of your tomatoes, plant trees and shrubs, and reseed your lawn if it didn't make it through summer. Plant bulbs anytime before the ground freezes. Be sure to give new plants plenty of water before they go dormant.

Service your heating/air system. If you have air conditioning, it's likely been working overtime lately. But cold weather will be here soon. Test your thermostat to make sure it works properly and make sure heating vents are open and unblocked. Get heating ducts cleaned and serviced before the busy season. A clean system will be more energy efficient, and an inspection by a professional will alert you to any problems.

Garage door maintenance. Whether your garage door raises manually or electronically, you'll need to lubricate the rollers and tracks to ensure they're operating properly.

Pro Tip: It's worth having a professional conduct a full garage door inspection. A garage door repair technician will look at hinges and rollers, end bearings, brackets, and more. If anything needs to be adjusted or aligned, they'll be able to tackle it.

10

OCTOBER

Fall is officially here, so it's time to start preparing for wet and cooler weather.

Examine your foundation. Take a walk around your home to check the foundation for cracks. It can cause big trouble in the winter when the rain hits. Address cracks immediately.

Close up the pool. There may be a few hot days left this month, but the swim season is winding down. When you're ready, clean, close, and cover your pool for winter, or call your pool maintenance company to do it for you.

Shut off sprinklers. Shut your sprinkler system off for the winter to protect it from freezing temps.

Inspect your sump pump. Ensure it's in good working order before rain causes a rise in groundwater.

Start planning inside projects. The height of summer remodel season may be ending, especially for outdoor projects, but home improvement can still be done during the winter. Begin planning what tasks you want to tackle before the holidays.

Pro Tip: To patch small foundation cracks, follow these steps. **Step 1:** Clear out any loose bits of concrete with a flathead screwdriver and a stiff wire brush or air compressor. **Step 2:** Widen the crack with a hammer and chisel to give the patch a larger surface area to adhere to. Continue clearing debris. **Step 3:** Rinse the area with warm water and dry with a rag. **Step 4:** For cracks smaller than 1/2 inch wide or deep, seal with a vinyl concrete patching compound. For cracks smaller than 1/2" wide or deep, use a caulking gun with latex concrete caulk. For excessively large cracks, call a professional as there may be a bigger issue.





11

NOVEMBER

The cold weather may be here, but it doesn't diminish our love of the outdoors. Focus on giving your landscaping some extra attention this month.

Rake, aerate, and mulch. Raking away leaves and aerating your lawn will prevent mold, ensure it can breathe, and that its roots can grow deeply. Adding mulch around vulnerable plants and shrubs, is a great way to protect your landscape from the winter elements.

Clean your gutters. Now that the majority of the leaves are off the trees, it's time to clean your gutters for the second time this year. Any repairs that need to be done on the gutters or downspouts should happen before winter sets in. While you're up there, look for and fix any damaged or broken tiles on the roof.

Properly store firewood. If you plan to use your fireplace this winter (not on Spare the Air days of course) stock up on firewood now. Stack it on pallets, so it does not sit on wet ground and don't pack the wood too tightly, or fungus could grow. Cover the wood with plastic sheeting.

Examine the chimney. If you have not gotten your chimney cleaned and inspected yet this year, call a chimney sweep now and have it done before you need to use it.

Pro Tip: To clean out your gutters, follow these steps. **Step 1:** Lay down a tarp (so you don't make a huge mess on your lawn or deck). **Step 2:** Remove debris and leaves by hand or with the help of a leaf blower. **Step 3:** Flush gutters and downspouts with a garden hose to check for leaks.

12

DECEMBER

The year is winding down and, with the busy holiday season approaching, it's time to winterize your home.

Put lights up safely. Skip daisy-chaining strands of lights. Instead, use exterior extension cords, a power strip with anti-trip, and a GFCI outlet with a waterproof cover. Don't forget to follow ladder safety guidelines!

Flush the water heater. Don't get stuck having to take cold showers this winter. Flushing your water heater removes sediment and improves its lifespan and efficiency. This should be done at least once a year — twice if you have more than four people in your household.

Guard against pipe bursts. On the coldest winter nights, water in pipes can freeze and cause it to expand, damaging or cracking the pipes. When that happens and the ice melts, you're at risk for a pipe burst and flood in or around your home. The most vulnerable are pipes that run outdoors or through unheated areas like the garage or attic. Start by shutting off and draining outdoor faucets, and covering spigots with a protective faucet cover. Then insulate with pipe wraps or foam pipe sleeves to keep them warm.



Change fan rotation. Changing the rotation of your ceiling fans in winter helps drive warm air down from the ceiling.

Pro Tip: AAA House Manager Classic and Premier plans include 2 hours of an Essential Seasonal Maintenance task. Choose our Home System Check-Up. We'll take care of crucial but oft-forgotten tasks that keep your home running smoothly: cleaning the dryer vent, flushing the hot water heater, replacing air filters, and vacuuming refrigerator coils.