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Give your home an annual check-up

By Liz O'Neill Special to AFN Nov 15, 2013



Submitted photo

We schedule annual check-ups for ourselves, our kids, our pets, our cars...what about our homes?

Giving your home an annual check-up, like visiting your doctor every year, is a great preventative measure to ward off future issues and problems. It's a way to check vital signs, see what is working and what needs attention. It's also a good thing to do if you are thinking of selling your home and want to get it in the best possible condition for an inspection that a potential buyer is likely to schedule.

Autumn is a great time to do this. Right before the holiday rush and when the weather here in Arizona is glorious. You can enlist help from family members or team up with a neighbor to examine your homes together. You won't need a stethoscope; all you need is a few hours and a few tools to complete the check-up. Don't forget a pen to check off the items from the list below.

Annual home check-up list:

- Make sure all plumbing fixtures are in proper working order with no leaks.
- Check that toilets are secured to the floor.
- Check that bathroom vents operate.
- Check all interior and exterior light fixtures to make sure they work.
- If you have halogen lights, make sure they are away from flammable drapes and low ceiling areas.
- Replace frayed or cracked electrical cords and don't overload extension cords.

- Ensure all windows operate smoothly.
- Replace all damaged window screens.
- Tighten all doorknobs and tighten or repair all handrails, also check to be sure all interior and exterior doors latch.
- Be sure that there is a minimum of one smoke detector per floor and that it is in proper working condition.
- Divert all water away from the house, i.e. down spouts, sump pump, condensation drain, etc.
- Check under carpets and around windows for visible mold or mildew.
- Remove grade or mulch from contact with siding/stucco, preferably 6 or more inches of clearance.
- Clear away all dead vegetation around the home. Trim away all vegetation touching the house such as tree branches and leaves.
- Remove wood/firewood from contact with the house.
- Clean out dirty gutters or debris from the roof.
- Install window wells and covers where windows are at or below grade.
- Install GFCI receptacles near all water sources; check present GFCI receptacles for proper operation.
- If your house has a crawlspace, check to see if it is dry and properly vented.
- *Ahwatukee Foothills resident Liz O'Neall is co-owner of AZ Property Inspections, a Valleywide home inspection company.*

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