

As the warmth of spring approaches, it's easy to forget the damage that harsh winter weather may have done to your house. A bit of spring maintenance now can prevent costly repair bills later. Review these five tips for spring maintenance to avoid any unwelcome surprises.

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- 1. *Inspect roof and gutters*. Repair any damage caused by snow or ice to prevent leaks during spring storms and clear debris from gutters and downspouts.
- 2. *Check smoke detectors.* Change the batteries in your smoke detectors and conduct tests to ensure they're working correctly.
- 3. **Stop leaks**. Check the seals around your windows and doors for cracking or hardening caulk.
- 4. **Perform lawn maintenance.** Remove dead or unhealthy trees, which could fall in heavy winds. Also, change the oil in your lawn mower and sharpen its blades.
- 5. **Prevent water damage.** Check connecting pipes and hoses on all water appliances for cracks, leaks or dampness.

Here are more tips on how you can also prevent water damage:

- Grade the soil around the foundation to help prevent water from pooling near the home, which can lead to leaks and water damage.
- Regularly maintain plumbing and sewer lines by having a plumber perform routine inspections to identify potential issues and to clear out any blockages.
- Avoid flushing inappropriate items down the toilet or pouring grease down the sink, as these can lead to clogs and backups.
- Install a sump pump or replace an aging one to help prevent basement flooding.
 - Regular testing and maintenance of the sump pump is important to ensure it functions properly.

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