



Housing...Inside and Out

Spring Home Maintenance

Spring is here (or almost here in our case.) and it's a good time to do a few things around the house to make sure that you're not paying for costly repairs down the road. April showers may bring May flowers, but they can also bring leaky basements, moldy walls and costly cleanup. So when you start your spring cleaning, don't forget to check the outside of your home to make sure it's protected from water damage and natural disasters. "You can take a few hours to do a spring maintenance check—or you can wait for a storm to come along and show you where your home's weaknesses are."

Action Restoration Inc. recommends all homeowners use the Spring Checklist & Tasks

Exterior

1. Starting with the roof, the first thing you should inspect for is wind, snow or ice damage. Check to see that the roof shingles are secure, tightly fastened and in good condition. If any of the shingles are loose, repair with asphalt roofing cement. If they are damaged or missing, replacement will be necessary and may require professional help. Also remove leaves and other litter from roof valleys, chimney and skylights.
2. Check the gutters and downspouts to be sure that they are securely anchored to the house. Also clean the gutters and downspouts of debris. Repair holes or leaks, secure loose sections.
3. Check weather stripping on windows and doors for damage and tightness of fit. Examine all doors and windows hardware. Clean "weep holes" at the bottom of metal storm windows.
4. Re-grade around foundation so water drains away from home. Trim foundation plantings, check bricks or block for cracked mortar or loose joints, re-point or repair as necessary.

Interior

1. Inspect attic fan, clean blades, louvers and vents, Test fan thermostat, inspect insulation for compacted or misplaced sections
2. Check interior walls painted surfaces for cracked/peeling paint, water damage, mildew or mold, repair paint or patch.
3. Inspect washing machine hoses and connections, tighten loose hoses, and replace old hoses. Inspect dryer vent connections, clean vent pipe and outdoor vent doors of lint.
4. Furnace/Air conditioner check around all gas appliances for leaks(sniff test), Change furnace filters
5. Basement or crawlspace test sump pump, inspect discharge pipe, supports and fixtures.
6. Safety features change the batteries and test carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Test all GFCI outlets (kitchen, bathrooms, garage, outside).

The Young Businessman

A young businessman had just started his own firm. He rented a beautiful office and had it furnished with antiques. Sitting there, he saw a man come into the outer office. Wishing to appear the hot shot, the businessman picked up the phone and started to pretend he had a big deal working.

He threw huge figures around and made giant commitments. Finally he hung up and asked the visitor, "Can I help you?"

The man said, "Yeah, I've come to activate your phone lines."

When Disaster Strikes

It is easy to show good character when life goes well, but it is during difficult times that our true colors come through. Such was the case on April 19, 1995, when tragedy struck Oklahoma City at 9:02 am. A truck bomb devastated the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building and many others around it.

Yet in the midst of disaster, Oklahomans and others around the world demonstrated tremendous endurance, generosity, and compassion. While we mourn the loss of those who died, we celebrate the character of those who responded with love and sacrifice to their neighbors in need.

We remember another tragedy this month. On April 20, 1999, shots rang through the halls of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Once again, people from near and far demonstrated true concern for those who were hurting.

These and other tragedies can be difficult to understand, and even more difficult to explain to young children. However, viewing troubles from a perspective of character can help students see how inner attitudes affect outward actions. It teaches that bad choices have bad consequences, but it can also illustrate how to respond with good character in the midst of tragedy.

How do you want your children or grandchildren to respond to difficult situations? Do you want them to think only of themselves or to look out for other people's interests? Now is the time to develop their character, so that when the real test comes, they will pass with flying colors.