



Essential Home Maintenance Guide for Every Homeowner

ABSTRACT

Home maintenance is a crucial aspect of preserving the functionality, safety, and value of a home. This guide provides an essential roadmap for homeowners, covering preventive measures, regular inspections, and critical repairs. By following these practices, homeowners can ensure the longevity of their property, reduce long-term costs, and create a safe and comfortable living environment.

INTRODUCTION

Owning a home is a significant investment that requires ongoing care and attention. Proper maintenance is not just about fixing issues as they arise but also about preventing problems before they occur. This guide outlines practical tips and strategies for essential home upkeep, from routine tasks like cleaning gutters to major projects like inspecting the roof and plumbing. Understanding and implementing these steps will help homeowners maintain their property's value and functionality.

I. The Ultimate Home Maintenance Checklist for Every Season

Easily navigate your home's seasonal upkeep with our home maintenance checklist and expert advice.

Like a regular health check-up, a home maintenance checklist and schedule are important for every house's upkeep. Continuing to check on your exterior, appliances, heating and cooling, plumbing, security, and electrical systems will help prevent breakdowns, save money, and keep your home looking its best.



Use this home maintenance checklist to help schedule seasonal updates, repairs, cleaning, and a handful of monthly tasks. Revisit the list monthly and at the beginning of each season to keep your home in prime working condition. If any recommended home repairs and maintenance go beyond your skill level or lead to more complicated projects, consider hiring a professional to help.

Monthly Home Maintenance Checklist

Inspecting your home and completing monthly home improvement projects will keep your maintenance schedule on track and easier to manage. Follow this comprehensive home maintenance checklist each month to help save time and money:

Air Quality and Vents

- Clean the furnace filter to remove dust build-ups, make it easier to regulate your home's temperature, and ultimately decrease energy bills.
- Vacuum heat registers and heat vents.
- Check that indoor and outdoor air vents are not blocked.

Plumbing and Water

- Check the water softener and replenish salt if necessary.
- Clean the garbage disposal by grinding ice cubes, then flushing with hot water and baking soda.

- Inspect tub and sink drains for debris; unclog if necessary.
- Flush out hot water from the water heater to remove accumulated sediment.

Home Safety

- Test smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, and all ground-fault circuit interrupters. Check the gauge and expiration date on fire extinguishers.
- Inspect electrical cords for wear.

Fall Home Maintenance Checklist

In many regions, fall is the perfect season to tackle general home maintenance projects because the weather is usually dry and temperatures are moderate. Before you start your seasonal home maintenance checklist, examine your home's interior and exterior. Most of these tasks can be accomplished without the help of a professional, but it's always better to be safe and call for assistance if a project is beyond your abilities.



Here are our seasonal home maintenance checklist recommendations for fall:

Landscaping and Yard Prep

- Rake leaves and aerate the lawn.
- Remove leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Practice pest prevention by keeping firewood away from the house, trimming shrubs, and repairing rotten or broken woodwork. Remove any wasp nests hanging from eaves or overhangs.
- Drain and winterize exterior plumbing, including hoses and in-ground sprinkler systems.

Home Exterior Repairs and Updates

- Mend cracks and gaps in the driveway and walkway.
- Touch up exterior siding and trim with paint.
- Power-wash windows and siding.
- Inspect roofing for missing, loose, or damaged shingles and leaks.
- Repair or replace siding.
- Clean window and door screens.
- Replace old, drafty windows for more energy-efficient models.
- Seal cracks and gaps in windows and doors with caulk or weather stripping; replace if necessary.
- Inspect exterior door hardware; fix squeaky handles and loose locks.
- Wrap insulation around outdoor faucets and pipes in unheated garages.

Interior Cleaning and Inspection

- Have the forced-air heating system inspected by a professional. Schedule an inspection in late summer or early fall before the heating season begins.
- Check the fireplace for damage or hazards and clean fireplace flues. Have your fireplace professionally inspected.
- Tune up major home appliances before the holidays.
- Replace the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Install a smoke detector on every floor of your home, including the basement.
- Clean carpets.
- Vacuum lint from the dryer vent.
- Check the water heater for leaks.

Winter Home Maintenance Checklist

Winter weather can be harsh on your home. The below-freezing temperatures can cause a number of problems, including frozen pipes and roof damage.



To prevent winter harm and avoid calling a professional in the middle of a blizzard, be sure to check these winter items off your home maintenance checklist:

Exterior Repairs and Updates

- Cover your air-conditioning unit.
- Inspect the roof, gutters, and downspouts for damage after storms.
- Stock up on sidewalk salt and ice melt.

Interior Cleaning and Inspection

- Check the basement for leaks during thaws.
- Vacuum bathroom exhaust fan grill.
- Vacuum refrigerator and freezer coils and empty and clean drip trays.
- Clean drains in sinks, tubs, showers, and dishwashers.
- Set up mouse traps as needed.

How to Prep Your Home's Hose Bibs for Winter

Spring Home Maintenance Checklist

Once the ground has thawed and the trees begin to bud, it's time to prepare your home for spring. On top of your regular spring cleaning, you'll also want to consider these general upkeep tips. Use our spring home maintenance checklist to make sure everything in your home, from the basement to the roof, is in tip-top shape:

Landscaping and Yard Prep

- Refinish the deck.
- Fertilize your lawn.

- Prune trees and shrubs.

Exterior Repairs and Updates

- Clean window and door screens.
- Remove leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Have a professional inspect and pump the septic tank.
- Inspect roofing for missing, loose, or damaged shingles and leaks.
- Inspect the chimney for damage.
- Wash windows.
- Power-wash siding.
- Repair or replace caulking and weather stripping around windows, doors, and mechanicals.
- Remove the insulation from outdoor faucets and check sprinkler heads.

Interior Cleaning and Inspection

- Clean faucet aerators and showerheads to remove mineral deposits. Repeat in the fall.
- Change the air-conditioner filter.
- Polish wood furniture and dust light fixtures.
- Replace the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Inspect sink, shower, and bath caulking for deterioration.
- Vacuum lint from the dryer vent.
- Have the air-conditioning system serviced.
- Drain or flush the water heater.

The 9 Best Pressure Washers, According to Testing

Summer Home Maintenance Checklist

When the sun is out, and warm weather is finally here to stay, home maintenance is the last thing you should worry about. Use our quick summer home maintenance guide to get the hard work out of the way at the beginning of the season.

Don't worry if the weather is already heating up; these tasks are indoors:

Interior Cleaning and Inspection

- Remove lint from your dryer vent.
- Clean kitchen exhaust fan filter.
- Clean refrigerator and freezer coils and empty and clean drip trays.

- Check the dishwasher for leaks.
- Check around kitchen and bathroom cabinets and around toilets for leaks.
- Replace faucet and showerhead washers if needed.
- Seal tile grout.

II. Home Repairs Anyone Can Do

Test your thermostat

Risk: If the temperature in your house isn't what shows on the thermostat, your air conditioner or furnace could be working too hard.

How to DIY it: Every spring and fall, tape a household thermometer on the wall next to the thermostat. After about 15 minutes, compare readings. If the difference between the two numbers is more than a few degrees, try recalibrating your thermostat (follow the manufacturer's instructions).



While you're at it: If you don't have a programmable thermostat, consider getting one. According to the Department of Energy, an Energy Star-rated model can save you about \$180 in heating and cooling costs each year. You can buy one for about \$40 and install it yourself. It's a relatively easy job; no rewiring required. On the other hand, these are home improvement projects you should never, ever DIY.



Stop air leaks under doors

Risk: Cooling or heating the world outside your home is obviously wasteful—and expensive.

How to DIY it: Most door thresholds (also called a saddle; below) adjust up and down with screws. Turn all the screws equally until the door opens and closes without much drag and the draft is eliminated.

While you're at it: You can seal drafty windows with removable caulk, which will keep cold air outside in winter and easily peel off come spring.

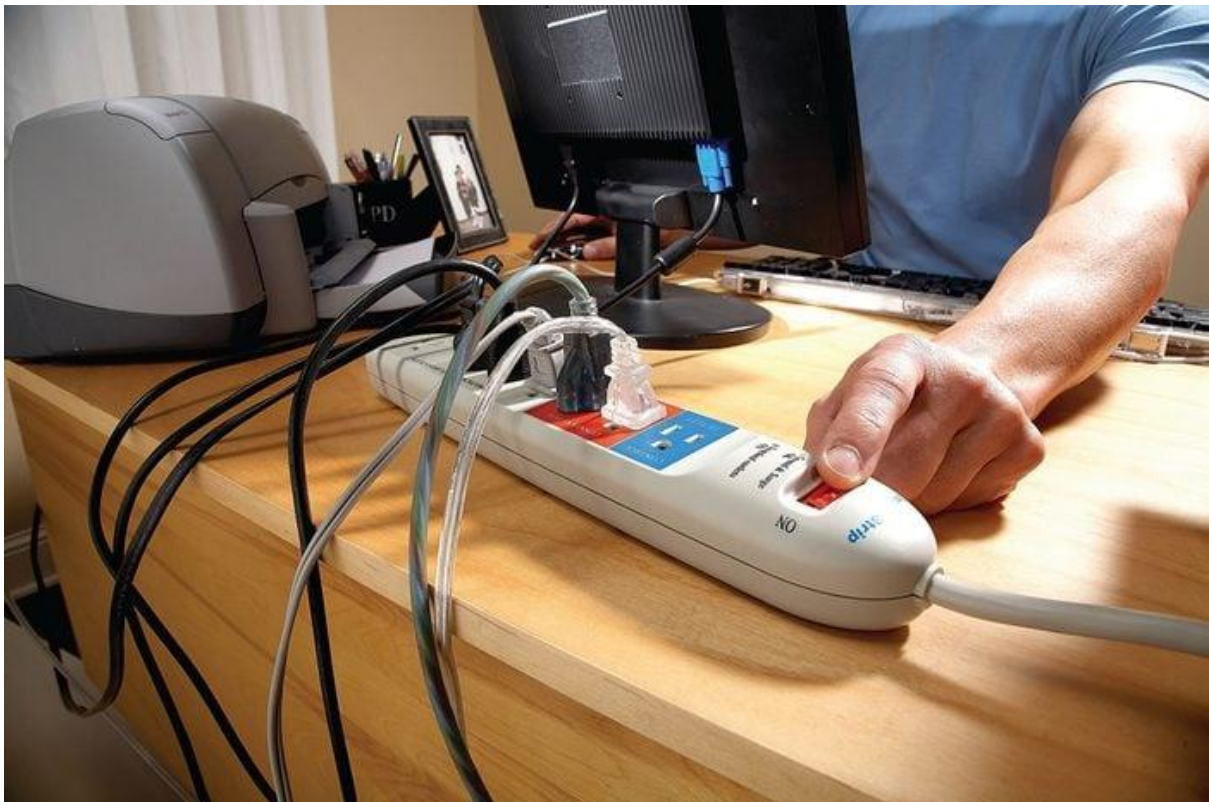
Patch a hole in drywall

Risk: Holes happen, but you don't have to pay a pro \$100 or more to patch them. The easiest way to do it yourself is with an adhesive aluminum patch, some joint

compound (similar to spackle), and a taping knife, all sold at paint and hardware stores for just a few dollars.

How to DIY it: Clean up any rough edges around the hole, then stick the patch onto the wall over the hole (left). Using the taping knife, spread a layer of joint compound over it and let it dry overnight. Then spread a wider second coat, feathering out the compound on all sides to make the patch blend in. Let it dry, then apply one more coat extending 8 to 12 inches beyond the patch in all directions. After the final coat dries, sand the area with a sanding sponge (a foam block wrapped in sandpaper) until it feels smooth and even. Prime, and then paint.

While you're at it: You can use joint compound to fill nail holes too. After filling the holes, apply a second coat and scrape the excess so the area is flush with the wall. Then prime and paint.



Protect your electronics

Risk: Power surges—caused by lightning, an unstable power grid, or heavy power use from energy-hog appliances such as your refrigerator or furnace—can fry your electronics. That includes anything with a digital display: your computer, TV, microwave, smart fridge, etc.

How to DIY it: Buy surge suppressors at a home-improvement store for \$20 or so apiece, then plug each of your gadgets into one.

While you're at it: Consider a whole-house surge suppressor, which protects all your devices from external surges. You'll need an electrician to install it; expect to pay \$400 to \$600 for the job.



Repair carpet snags

Risk: If you have carpet with woven loops, loose fibers can easily unravel into even bigger snags. This quick fix is far cheaper than replacing carpeting, which will run you about \$40 per square yard, on average.

How to DIY it: Gently tug the loose part of the carpet to find the point where it's still attached. Snirap it off as close to the backing as possible and save it. Use painter's tape to surround the repair area. Squeeze a heavy bead of carpet seam sealer (about \$6 at home centers) into the run. Then fill in the hole with the saved fiber, using a screwdriver to press it into the sealer bit by bit until the area looks like the surrounding carpet (below).

While you're at it: Vacuum high-traffic areas at least once a week. This may sound like a no-brainer, but fabric experts stress that because dirt is abrasive, walking on dirty carpet—even if it looks clean—damages the fibers, making it stain more easily and wear out faster. Don't miss these easy home repairs you can do yourself.



Unclog refrigerator coils

Risk: When coils are clogged with dust, pet hair, and cobwebs, they can't efficiently release heat. That makes your refrigerator's compressor work harder and longer than necessary, using more energy and shortening its life.

How to DIY it: Coils are located on the back of the refrigerator or across the bottom. Pull the fridge away from the wall. (Hint: Grab the sides and pull from the bottom.)

You may want to lay cardboard on the floor first to prevent scratching.) Clean coils with a coil-cleaning brush (about \$10 at home centers), then vacuum. Do this every six months or so.

While you're at it: Wipe down the rubber gaskets that line the inside edges of the refrigerator and freezer doors, as a poor seal can also make your appliance less efficient. Use warm water and a sponge (no detergents, which can do damage).



Freshen up the dishwasher

Risk: If yours isn't doing its job, you'll waste water by having to wash dishes again by hand or in another run through the machine.

How to DIY it: A simple cleaning often solves the problem. Start by pulling out the lower dish rack. Remove the spray arm and use a thin piece of wire to clean out the holes where water sprays through. Scoop or vacuum out any leftover food particles from the filter area, then remove the filter screen (above), if possible, and give it a good rinse.

While you're at it: If your dishwasher smells, cleaning the filter should help. Also, wipe the door with a spray cleaner. Then throw in a bottle of dishwasher cleaner (about \$5) and run the machine empty.



Degrease range-hood filters

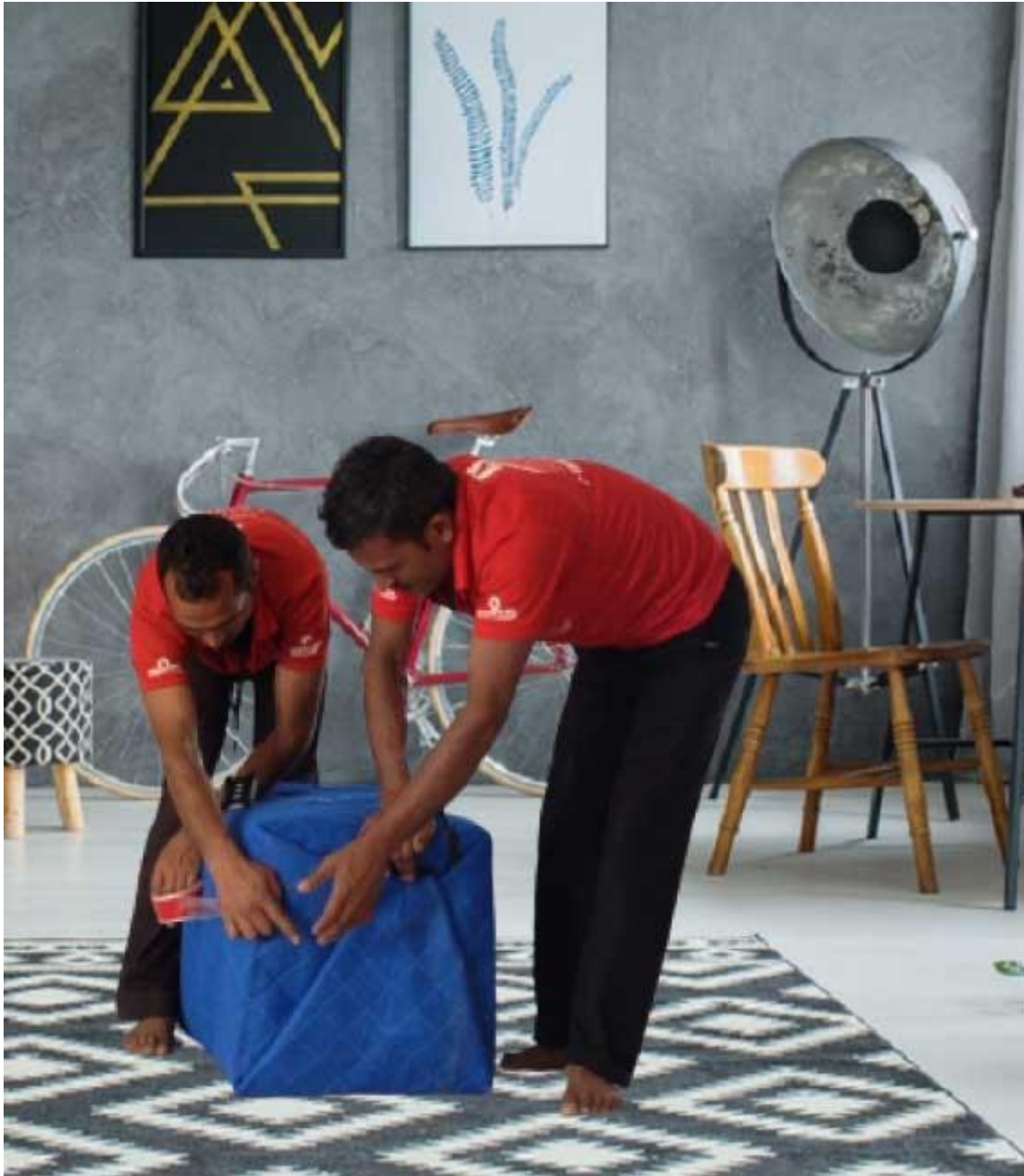
Risk: The range hood sucks cooking fumes up and out of the kitchen. As grease splatters, it builds up and clogs the filter in the underside of the hood, keeping the fan from working as it should. This could cause your smoke alarm to go off, attract fruit flies, and leave potentially harmful pollutants from your gas or electric range lingering in the air. And if you have to replace the motor, it will cost around \$200.

How to DIY it: Once a month or so, pop out the filter and run it through the dishwasher. (You can also place it in a sink full of hot water, dishwashing liquid, and baking soda and let it soak for ten to 15 minutes.) Scrub any remaining grease off with a brush, then rinse and dry the filter before putting it back.

While you're at it: Wipe down the fan blades and the rest of the hood with an all-purpose cleaner.

III. Handling Specialty Items: Fine Art, Antiques, And Valuables During A Move

Handling Specialty Items: Fine Art, Antiques, And Valuables During A Move Aug 09, 2023 Speciality items need more attention and care during a house move than regular items. They can incur irreversible damage and cost you thousands of dollars. Loss of speciality items like fine art, antiques and valuable can also impact your sentimentally and cause emotional pain.



Therefore, it isn't surprising that many people hire professional removalists in Gold Coast to handle and move such items. However, a house move is expensive and when you plan to take these things with you to the new home, exercising caution is necessary.

Here's how you can handle speciality items like fine arts, antiques and valuable like a professional. Have a look.

Arrange The Right Packing Supplies

Protecting speciality items is the main goal of packing, which is why you need to get

the right supplies. When you avail of a professional removal service, the removalists in Gold Coast bring the necessary packing material.

Listed below are things you will need to wrap and protect speciality items in your home before moving.

Moving blankets

Furniture pads

Plastic-stretch wrap

Acid-free foam or bubble wraps

Packing tape

Rent/Buy Moving Tools

With large antiques, art or other items, the risk of toppling is high, and you can get injured while moving it. Therefore, you need to use moving tools to prevent injuries and manage the movement of bulky items without hassle.



Professional removalists in Gold Coast also use equipment and tools to shift and load items on the moving truck without damaging the items. For a DIY speciality items move, you require the following tools.

Furniture sliders with straps

Moving dolly or a hand truck

Harnesses and straps

Create an Inventory

Write the names, measurements and other important details of every speciality item to pack and move. An inventory helps keep track of items while moving and ensure they reach the new home safely.

You can use a simple format for listing fine art, antiques and valuables or download a professional inventory checklist used by experienced removalists in Gold Coast. Make sure to declutter before outlining items to avoid confusion and wasting time. You can resell unwanted arts and antiques by hosting an online or offline garage sale.

Measure & Weigh Items

Collectables are often of different sizes and weights, making it necessary to measure and weigh them before packing and transporting. If you hire special removalists in Gold Coast to move your speciality items, they will manage this step while creating inventory.



However, when handling them yourself use a measuring tape and weighing scales to get accurate dimensions. This step is crucial to get the right packing supplies, rent a moving truck and keep your belongings safe.

Pack Carefully & Adequately

Make sure to wrap fragile art, antiques and valuables with bubble or foam wrap and secure them with quality packing tape. Don't wrap the items too tightly or loosely else, they can incur irreversible damage while handling.

While packing paintings, make sure to cushion the corners with bubble wrap to avoid chipping. If you lack the time, energy or expertise to move expensive and rare items securely, take the assistance of professional removalists in Gold Coast specialising in handling and moving speciality items.

Use The Right Loading & Moving Techniques

Most people make the mistake of stacking artwork, antiques and valuables incorrectly while loading the moving truck causing severe damage and incurring financial distress. Therefore, you must plan and prepare for handling artwork carefully to avoid mishaps.

Never list heavy items and always use moving sliders to move them from one place to another. Also, lift boxes with your legs and support them with your stomach. These are techniques professional removalists in Gold Coast use to avoid injuries and ensure the safety of artwork, antiques, valuables and other household items.

Consider Storing Fine Art, Antiques and Valuables

In case you don't have the time to move your expensive and rare items safely to the new home, you can always rent a storage unit. Store the items in the facility until you settle in the new house and are ready to keep the collectibles again. Depending on the type of arts and artifacts you have, rent a temperature-controlled storage unit or a normal one.



Thus, while your hired removalists in Gold Coast pack and move your property contents, the fine art, antiques and valuables can remain safe at the storage unit, and you can have peace of mind while moving.

Moving speciality items like fine art, antiques and valuables is challenging which is why many people hire professional removalists in Gold Coast. However, if you plan to do it yourself, use this guide to handle speciality items like a professional and avoid financial loss.

IV. Electrical Panels: Replacement Signs, Maintenance, and Basics

The electrical panel is the core of your home's electrical system. All power flows through it, and breakers or fuses contained within it control every circuit in your home.



Understand the basics of your home's electrical service panel to keep you safe and your home well-lit and energized.

What an Electrical Panel Is

The electrical panel connects the external electrical wires to the home's internal electric system.

The electrical panel—also called a circuit breaker box or service panel—is the central distribution point that connects the primary outside wire to the inside wires that split off and service different parts of the house. These wires are called branch circuits or branch wire circuits.

The electrical panel in single-family residences is owned by the building owner, not the electric company. So, if anything goes wrong with the panel, the owner is responsible.

Common Electrical Panel Sizes

Different electrical panels provide 100, 200, or more amperes (or, amps) of power to a home. Homes built between 1950 and 1965 may have 60-ampere fuse boxes, often with just four fuses.

Here's more information on the standard sizes and how many amps of electricity you may need:

- **100 amps:** The average home has 100 amps, but this may be inadequate for most households.
- **150 amps:** A home that runs multiple appliances simultaneously will need 150 amps of electricity in an electrical panel.

- **200 amps:** A home with heavier energy demands or a house that is nearly 2,000 square feet in size may need 200 amps.
- **400 amps:** Large homes with high-energy needs or properties with added workshops or outbuildings will typically require 400 amps to run smoothly.

Where to Find the Electric Service Panel

By its nature, the main service panel is usually kept away from the main household activities. Likely locations for the electrical panel include:



- **Garage:** The garage often hosts the electric service panel because it is covered, accessible, and close to other services. Look on the wall adjacent to the house.
- **Basement:** If the home has a basement, the electric service panel will likely be located there. Look along the basement's exterior walls.
- **Hallways:** If the electric service panel is located in a hallway, it will usually lead to the garage or outdoors rather than near the main entrance.
- **Pantry:** The electric service panel may be tucked away in a built-in pantry adjacent to the kitchen or a utility closet.
- **Outdoors:** While not typical, a service panel may be found on an exterior wall, especially with older fuse boxes.

Tip

One way to find the panel is to go outside and locate the service drop and service head on your roof. The service panel should be directly below. For buried power lines, the line will start at the street and connect to the home near the front or side of the home.

Electrical Panel Repair and Replacement

You will know that you need an electrical panel replacement or an upgrade to a larger size if you experience the following problems:

- Flickering and dimming lights
- Power surges and tripped breakers
- A panel that's broken, rusting, sounding odd, or has burn marks
- A panel that's hot to the touch and emits smoke

Circuit Breaker Panels vs. Fuse Boxes

Electric service panels have several different names: fuse box, breaker box, fuse panel, and circuit breaker panel.

Today, most homes have what is called the electrical service panel, or simply the service panel. There are two types of electrical panels: single-phase, used mostly in homes, and three-phase, used in commercial buildings that require extra power.

A circuit breaker panel is not a fuse box because it has mechanical, toggle-switch circuit breakers, not fuses. But it does perform the same function. The older fuses screw or pull in or out, as opposed to the rocker-style method of installing and removing circuit breakers.

Panel Components

- **Panel door:** An outer panel door that swings open
- **Removable cover:** Protective cover with spaces for the circuit breaker switches
- **Main breaker:** Large switch that shuts off incoming power to all of the circuits
- **Lugs:** Metal lugs attached to thick wires that lead out and connect to the service drop
- **Circuit breakers:** Removable 15A or 20A switches that control individual electric circuits
- **Spaces:** Open or spare spaces on the service panel for creating extra circuits (sometimes, all open spaces will be filled with circuit breakers)
- **Wires:** Assortment of wires that run from the circuit breakers to the circuits that service areas of the house

Electrical Panel Safety

Electrical panels are designed and built with safety in mind. Even so, it's essential to be safe when working with them:

- **Door safety:** Under normal conditions, the service panel is safe to touch when its outer door is closed or open, and the circuit breaker switches are exposed.
- **Keep protective cover in place:** Working on an open electrical service panel with both the door and the protective front cover removed is dangerous.
- **Avoid service wires and lugs:** In the service panel, two heavy-gauge wires enter the panel from the meter base or a remote disconnect. These are the ends of the service wires that come into your house from the outside. Avoid touching these wires, the lugs, or anything that these wires or lugs touch.
- **Main breaker doesn't shut off power:** Shutting off the panel's main circuit breaker switch will not necessarily keep you safe. The main breaker cuts off the power to all of the home's branch circuits, but it does not shut off the power coming into the panel on the utility service lines or to the lugs the lines are connected to.
- **Watch your tools:** The exposed service panel, screwdrivers, wire cutters, wire strippers, pliers, and other items can potentially touch parts of the service wires and transmit an electric shock.

Installing More Circuit Breakers

You can add more circuits and circuit breakers inside your electrical service panel box as long as there are spaces. In many cases, the service panel will have available spaces.

Some older homes may have completely filled out their spaces. In this case, an electrician can install a new, larger service panel box or add a smaller sub-panel and feed it from the main panel. This will require you to move older circuits to the sub-panel to make space for the feeder breaker.

Tip

An easy solution to a service panel that's full of circuit breakers and has no available slots: tandem circuit breakers. Tandem circuit breakers fit in the same-size slot as a normal breaker but can serve two separate circuits.

Generally, you can determine if there are more spaces by looking at the metal knock-outs on the panel itself. Any space that is not knocked out should be available for the insertion of another circuit breaker, but this is not always the case. Remove the cover to see how many open spaces are available.

DIY Repairs and Remodels

Since you own the electrical panel, you are allowed to work on its interior section for any type of work.

The most common fix is to remove and replace a circuit breaker. If you're expanding your home, adding new appliances, or living in an older home with a panel with fuses instead of breakers, you'll need an upgrade to a larger panel.

Though homeowners can work on the service panel, many avoid this for safety reasons. Even experienced DIYers still choose to call in an electrician for any work that involves removing the protective front cover and handling the electrical panel wiring.

Electrical panels cost about \$1,100 to upgrade or replace and \$1,300 to install.

V. Why You Need To Adjust Your Monthly Budget For Home Maintenance



As a homeowner, you likely save for certain costs every year—property taxes, insurance, utilities and DIY projects—and keep a stash of cash hidden for emergencies. But unlike renting, owning a home also means you're responsible for literally anything that goes wrong, so you can't afford to ignore continual home maintenance costs, either. Here's how to tweak your budget accordingly and prevent unexpected expenses from derailing your financial health.

"Buying a home is a big investment," says Des Moines-based realtor Sara Hopkins. "It's easy to focus on the cost of the home purchase and forget about what needs to be saved for routine home maintenance. I always recommend you put aside around 2% of your home's purchase every year in a savings account to deal with routine maintenance issues."

However, there's a big difference between big-ticket items often covered under a home warranty, like a furnace or water heater or new roof, and routine home repairs and maintenance. "If you've purchased a new home, structural, system, appliance

and even landscaping warranties may be in place,” explains Sharon Lang, a real estate agent in Northern Virginia. “Start off budgeting 5-10% of your net pay towards a home maintenance fund. While it may seem like you shouldn't have to, there are things that you will need to buy—installation of garage door openers, garden hoses, downspout extenders, door mats, furnace filters, refrigerator water filters, light bulbs, extension cords, batteries, cleaning equipment and supplies.”

Other items on the list, per Hopkins: having your HVAC inspected and cleaned, fixing plumbing leaks, pruning trees, pest treatments, repainting siding to keep moisture, and so on. Of course, you can't budget a specific amount for every single conceivable problem, says New York City-based real estate analyst Julie Gurner, but it's still wise to set aside a couple thousand dollars in a specific savings account to cover whatever does come up.

“A good view of annual maintenance and repair budgets for your house is between 1-4% of the purchase price of your house,” says John Bodrozic, cofounder of HomeZada. “If your house is less than five years old, then 1% is the appropriate range. If your house is 25 years or older, then 4% is a good number. Homes between 5 and 25 years old might vary between the 1-4% budget.”

Why the range? As homes get older, notes Bodrozic, more repair costs tend to consume a bigger portion of your overall maintenance costs. Newer homes, in contrast, required less annual maintenance because the materials are obviously newer, and many elements of the house may still be under warranty. And if you want to get super specific, real estate investor Eric Bowlin recommends building a spreadsheet of all the items in your house that outlines the item, lifespan and total cost—then use that number to calculate how much you'd need to save per year or month for potential repairs or replacement.

According to financial educator and coach Roslyn Lash, monthly saving is the way to go. GoBankingRates.com estimates that the average monthly cost for maintenance is around \$1,200, even though it does vary based on the size and location of the house. Lash echoes Bowlin's approach, and encourages home owners to use their inspection report as an overview of upcoming repairs in order to develop or adjust your budget. For example, if your home needs a \$5,000 roof in three years, says Lash, you'd want to say \$139 per month (\$5,000 divided by 36 months) toward it. Also, Bowlin suggests tracking such expenses over the years, which allows you to look back and see what annual maintenance costs have been. At the bare minimum, set aside enough money to cover a couple major repairs per year.

“Plan for the unexpected,” says Hopkins. “In Iowa, we often have to have tree roots removed from sewer lines—that's \$150-\$300, plus the cost of cleaning your basement when it backs up. Or if your dishwasher leaks, or your washing machine overflows. Having a home costs money, but the long term investment is far worth it in the end.”

CONCLUSION

Effective home maintenance is key to a safe, efficient, and valuable living space. By adopting the practices outlined in this guide, homeowners can address potential issues early, reduce repair costs, and enhance the comfort and safety of their homes. A proactive approach to maintenance ensures not only a well-kept home but also peace of mind for years to come.

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