

# Spring is here, prepare your property

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for TRIB TOTAL MEDIA



Enough winter already! I don't know about you, but I am ready to have "a little spring in my step." This has been a difficult and unusual winter when it comes to the weather. It's time to take a walk around the house and find out what damage the weather has caused to your home and property.

Let's face it, sub zero temperatures on a windy night and no matter what you saw or heard, you did not run out to see what was going wrong with your house. Now is the time for that.

## **YOUR HOME MAY BE MORE PRONE TO FIRE AND CARBON MONOXIDE PROBLEMS THIS SPRING**

You probably have noticed that there have been a lot of fires and carbon monoxide problems in the news lately. This is fairly common in November, but not usually in the spring. The long winter and extreme cold has been tough on budgets, furnaces and chimneys. Some of these were caused by improper space heater use to reduce fuel bills.

The extra wear this year can loosen mortar in brick chimneys and cause holes in metal chimneys. Birds and animals falling into chimneys while trying to stay warm is another source of blockage. Any of these can result in carbon monoxide staying in the home instead of going up the chimney.

The same problem can occur with blocked clothes dryer vents. Whether it is lint or animals trying to stay warm blocking those vents, they can be the source of fire or carbon monoxide poisoning. Blocked dryer vents are also a major cause of dryer heaters overheating and failing. I can tell you personally, a partially blocked dryer vent can result in a \$200.00 repair bill for heater element replacement.

## **WALK THROUGH YOUR HOME AND LISTEN BEFORE YOU LOOK**

Listen for unusual noises. If you hear a rubbing or scrapping sound, something is being worn that you really do not want to wear out. Limbs or wires hitting your roof or siding will damage those surfaces. If you delay repairs, even if you can replace the damaged surfaces, they are not likely to perfectly match and there will always be evidence of that repair.

When the sound you hear is a flopping noise, it is likely loose siding, soffit, wires, fixtures or another part that is far cheaper to secure back in place than fully replace.

A scratching noise usually signals the presence of an animal of some sort. You do not want any animal living in your walls or any other cavity in your home. The possible outcomes being, they will use those cavities as a bathroom or even worse they will die in your home. Both of these will create an unwelcome odor. Then, there's the difficult job of, first, finding them and then having to remove them.

If you hear the sound of water spraying, hissing or running, it could be a pinhole leak from a frost damaged pipe. These can easily occur in outside walls and crawl spaces. If a leak goes unnoticed, for even a short time, you could be facing major repairs and mold problems.

## **NOW, GO AND TAKE A GOOD LOOK AROUND YOUR PROPERTY**

- Check for loose siding, shingles, gutters, downspouts, soffit and fascia. Securing loose materials is cheaper and looks better than replacing them with new materials that will not match faded components.
- Branches, limbs, leaves and other debris blocking gutters will result in wall and foundation leaks. At the same time you are looking up, check for loose shingles. A leaking ceiling is a bad way to learn about roof leaks.
- After looking up at the roof, take a look down and identify and seal spaces between the house and patio or sidewalks to avoid wet basements
- Check for openings or breaks in your fences, particularly if you have pets.
- Retaining walls that have moved or pushed need repair before they fall and cause damage.



- Stand back and check your chimney conditions. Loose brick is a safety hazard, chipping brick can be a sign of blocked or oversized chimneys.
- Check railings to make sure that they are secure. A railing that comes loose can cause more injury than no railing at all if they come loose while being used for support.
- Check peeling paint, this often indicates that there is leakage into a wall or overhang.
- Look for hanging limbs. They can cause damage to whatever is below them when they finally come loose.
- Check that decks are secured. Every year we have stories about decks and balconies collapsing and falling.

## **LOOK IN YOUR ATTIC, REALLY!**

Condensate and mold was the major new problem in attics this year. Many homeowners had the unwelcome experience of finding mold in their attic where they never had it before. You need to make sure that your house was not one of those houses.

If you are one of the many people who experienced what looked like water leaks

and wet areas where there really should not have been water leaks, you probably were experiencing condensate problems.

A water glass filled with ice is expected to get condensate on the outside of it on the Fourth of July. That same temperature difference occurred in many attics where moist interior air met the sub zero cold roof and wall areas. It was the temperature differential that caused water to drip in areas where it never condensed before.

The bottom line here is that taking a look around the home can save you money and avoid inconvenience. Besides, it is finally a great time of year to spend some time outside.

For more information and resources on your spring house checkup, go online to: [www.EnviroSpect.info/SpringCheckup](http://www.EnviroSpect.info/SpringCheckup)

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