

Critical Home Maintenance

Smoke detectors: Put Safety first. Make sure your smoke detectors are working properly. You should also have a carbon monoxide detector. Yes, we have had a few major fires at Amhurst.

Vents: Have your chimney, furnace and dryer vents checked and cleaned. Dryer and chimney fires are a major cause of home fires. Check out our emergency preparedness document for more information on fire and home safety. If your dryer does not dry in one load, and you have cleaned the filter, it very well could be clogged. Don't use it and get it checked by a duct cleaner.

Furnace filter: Clean your furnace filter each month or if you have a high tech filter system, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Garage door: Ensure that your garage door is properly functioning and that all those little nuts and bolts on the door are secure.

Appliances: Follow the manufacturers' instructions on periodic maintenance on your furnace, water heater and softener and other appliances. If you need assistance, contact the manufacturer, local utilities (Xcel Energy, Centerpoint Minnegasco), appliance repair shops or one of our recommended handymen.

Internal plumbing: Periodically check under sinks, under your refrigerator, around toilets and washing machines for leaks. A large leak would probably be noticeable but not a slow, ongoing leak. Also check in your utility closet or room for leaks. Utilize non-bursting hoses for your washing machine and dishwasher. Help us save a lot of money by making sure your toilets and other 'water' appliances are not leaking.

External plumbing: Exercise your home's water shut off valve each year. Turn it on an off a number of times. By doing this, you reduce the risk that when you do want to shut off the water, the valve does not close all the way because of corrosion buildup. My suggestions. The next time you have a plumber in your home, you have your current valve replaced with a gate type valve. They don't malfunction over time. Turn off your outside water faucet line. Make sure you 'bleed' the line of any standing water.

Electrical: Make sure your electrical appliance cords are not frayed or otherwise not safe and you are using extension cords only on a temporary basis. Don't overload your circuits.

Leaks: Check ceilings for possible signs of seepage. Be aware of any musty smells that might be the sign of water intrusion. Be aware of your home as you are with your face. Sounds silly but it is true. If you notice changes such as discoloration on a ceiling, a small amount of mold in a corner, a subtle drip of a faucet, all need your attention. Don't ignore these issues. In many cases, putting off inspection and repair will appreciably increase repair costs and hassles for you. Also be aware the insurance just does not cover what it used to especially as it relates to water intrusion.