



EXTERIOR HOME MAINTENANCE: BY THE SEASONS





EXTERIOR HOME MAINTENANCE: BY THE SEASONS

Maintaining the safety, structural integrity, and value of your home requires ongoing maintenance. This can consume a lot of your time, effort, and resources.

You can limit your stress and outlays for repairs by staying on top of things and setting a maintenance schedule that spans the whole year, that way, you're more likely to get to everything and less likely to have minor problems develop into major ones.

Northeast has created this exterior maintenance schedule by season for you. If you have any questions, please reach out to us. We're here to help!

SPRING:

Spring is prime inspection time! Do a perimeter walk. Walk around the outside of your house to identify any damage or conditions that may have developed.

■ Check that roof.

You can identify most major problems by carefully looking for any damaged or missing shingles, water stains, or damp spots. Over time, even the best roofing system can develop problems, like leaks. A leaky roof caused by wind damage, hail damage, or general wear and tear might be repairable. Fixing roof leaks includes sealing all entry points, like shingles that are torn, cracked, or damaged. Repairing a leak may be as simple as troweling roofing cement over old, cracked flashing or as involved as replacing a large area of wind-torn shingles. If you have any concerns about your roof, call us and we'll take a look.

Northeast Home & Energy's roofing experts can handle any type of roof repair, including those that involve replacing fractured or rotted rafters and rotted decking. We take care to match existing shingle color and texture as closely as possible.

■ Replace or repair damaged wood.

Replace or repair damaged wood on the side of your house before the harsh rain of spring and summer causes further damage.

■ Look up at the chimney for signs of wear.

If you see any problems, have a chimney specialist take a closer look.

■ Check the facade and foundation.

Check the facade and foundation for cracks or signs of water pooling.

Fill the cracks in your walls and concrete. Filling in these cracks will be easier before the heat of the summer kicks in, and rain makes them worse. Cracks like these can lead to air leakage in the home, which can degrade your air conditioner's performance and detract from your home's curb appeal.

SPRING:

■ **Thoroughly clean your gutters.**

Your gutters manage the flow of rainwater on your house by channeling it away from your roof, siding, and foundation. Clogged gutters can cause a roof leak or other water breaches inside your home, basement, or foundation. We suggest that you clean your gutters at least twice a year in the spring and the fall. If you have trees hanging over your roof, you need to keep an eye on your gutters, as you may need an extra cleaning. Always check for damage to the gutters.

■ **Clean the dryer exhaust.**

A clogged vent can undermine your dryer's efficiency and pose a fire hazard. Make sure the exhaust is coming out while the dryer is running. If you don't notice much exhaust, you may have a blockage, which is best determined and repaired by a professional. Vacuuming the vent will also help the dryer's performance.

■ **Inspect your exterior paint.**

Exterior paint protects your shingles from water damage and rot. Look for signs of peeling or chipping paint. It's best not to delay this work, as you may need a touch-up or a fresh coat. If you plan to hire a professional, schedule the job in the spring so the work gets done by the end of the summer.

■ **Inspect the deck.**

Come springtime, you're likely looking forward to getting out on your deck. Before you bring outdoor furniture or other items outside, check carefully to confirm it is in shape. Look for cracked or loose boards, loose nails or wood rot, or small holes, which can be signs of the presence of insects. Always test for decay, especially in areas that seem to stay damp. If the wood is soft and spongy or doesn't splinter when poked with a screwdriver, you may need to replace it.

You'll need to address any of these problems before thoroughly cleaning and using the deck. To clean, first remove any leaves and other debris from between the boards. Wet the entire surface with a hose, then use a pump sprayer to apply a cleaning solution. Scrub it thoroughly with a broom and spray it down with a hose again. If you have a wooden deck, you should treat it with borate for algae to prevent wood rot. Finally, let the wood dry out completely (this may take a few days), then stain and seal it.

■ **Look for low spots or holes.**

Look for low spots or holes dug around your house and fill them in so that no puddles or standing water can damage your exterior walls or foundation.

■ **Remove any firewood.**

Remove any firewood away from your house. If you have a fire pit outside or a fireplace inside, you may have stored wood close to the house. In spring, insects, including termites and ants, resurface and may use your wood as a breeding ground. This could lead them inside the house.

■ **Check the integrity of your exterior spigots.**

Leaky outdoor spigots freeze over for months and then leak even more when they thaw, producing water waste and creating yet another potential water damage issue.

SUMMER:

In New England, summer can be the best time to undertake larger exterior projects.

■ Clean the exterior of your home.

If you don't clean your home regularly, nature will take over and the structure will deteriorate. Proper cleaning can prevent mildew and mold from damaging your paint, prolong the structure, improve curb appeal, increase your own enjoyment of the property, and rid the house exterior of insect debris, eggs, and cobwebs.

A complete exterior cleaning will include the fascia, soffits, walls, windows, entryway, and the outside of the gutters. Most industry professionals use a biodegradable, bleach-based agent that includes a detergent disinfectant that kills algae and fungus. They apply the solution and rinse it off using a low-pressure (100 psi) "softwash." Companies that claim to have a "chemical-free" process often have to blast the house with pressure as high as 4500 psi, which can harm the house. Look for licensed and insured professionals who specialize in washing house exteriors and roofs.

■ Replace windows.

Proper windows and doors are vital all year long, but especially in the summer to keep hot temperatures out and cool temperatures in. Have a professional window contractor like Northeast assess your windows and carry through the installation.

■ Repair the driveway.

Summer is a good time to fill in any and all potholes. For concrete driveways, you can patch or fill cracks or chips with a cement-repair product. Deeper cracks, sunken concrete, or asphalt drives are best left to a professional. To extend its longevity, an asphalt driveway should be resealed every two to five years.

■ Clean windows.

If you're cleaning your own windows, use strip applicators and/or squeegees instead of paper towels and window cleaning solution. Strip applicators soak up a lot of soapy water and knock dirt loose without scratching the glass. Use a small amount of dish soap in a bucket of warm water for your cleaning agent. A handheld sponge or hog-bristle brush works best on multi pane windows.

■ Check exterior lighting.

Although the days are longer in the summer, lighting remains an important safety consideration as children and adults extend outdoor activities. Make sure fixtures are clean and working properly and any burned out bulbs are replaced.

■ Repaint.

Paint is part of your home's protection against the elements, so it requires ongoing maintenance. Snow, sun, ice, frost, rain, and high humidity can undermine your paint. They can cause paint to swell and soften, which eventually leads to cracking, blistering, flaking, and peeling. The sun can cause paint to fade, and the ultraviolet rays can break down the exterior paint's binder. As the binder deteriorates, pigment is released in the form of chalk or a powder that can wash away when it rains.

FALL:

Fall's tasks set you up for a safer and more comfortable winter inside your home. They also prepare your home to stand up to New England's winter weather.

■ Do the Fall Walk.

Walk around your property and look for any damage to the siding, windows, foundation, or roof. If you spot anything that needs repair, schedule it before winter weather hits.

■ Caulk the cracks.

Address any gaps around windows and doors by re-applying caulk to prevent leaks.

■ Add weather stripping.

Applying weather stripping around the frames of windows and doors helps cut energy costs. Don't forget the doors — add door sweeps to the base of drafty doors to keep heat in and cold air out.

■ Clean out gutters and window wells.

Leaves, flower petals, and seeds can accumulate in your gutters and window wells in the summer. Clear the debris to keep rain water draining properly. Also, make sure an animal hasn't turned your window well into its home.

■ Prune trees and shrubs.

If you have trees close to the house, have them pruned to avoid undulating or falling limbs damaging your roof, siding, or windows. If you have a lot of trees on your property, consider hiring an arborist to care for them — these pros can spot signs of poor health early on to prevent tree loss and know how to prune properly to avoid falling limbs in winter storms.

■ Don't become a haven for creatures.

Mice and other smaller wildlife look for places to spend the winter as the weather turns. Many can sneak into your house through very small gaps. Fill small holes and cover any larger gaps with heavy-duty hardware cloth or other material.

■ Check walkways, railings, and stairs.

In winter weather, all outdoor surfaces and railings present hazards if not maintained. To ensure you can safely navigate around your home in poor weather, check to see that all stairs are in good shape and have sturdy railings. Check stone and brickwork.

■ Shut off exterior faucets and store hoses.

Protect your pipes from freezing temperatures by shutting off water to exterior faucets before the weather dips below freezing. Drain hoses and store them indoors.

With so many factors impacting your exterior projects, professional help and guidance can make a huge difference. That's why Northeast will work directly with you to help you create the best exterior project plan by putting your best interests first.

*We'll perform a **FREE INSPECTION** and advise you
honestly on what work your home needs.*

Give us a call! 508-839-7001