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Summer House Checklist

Once the weather clears and you can get outside, remember to take a look around your house and plan some maintenance. Like anything in life, little problems that don't get attended to turn into big problems. A house is no exception to this rule. Here is a list of a few things to take a look at this summer in hopes of keeping your castle in pristine shape:

- **Trim trees and brush away from your house** – We are lucky to live in the great, green Pacific Northwest but sometimes too much of a good thing can be a problem. Trees and bushes growing against your house often damage siding, rub holes in the roof as the wind blows, and provide a great avenue for insects and rodents to reach your home. More importantly, excess brush around your house is a fire spread hazard. When everything dries up at the end of the summer you don't want a bunch of "fuel" sitting close to your house.
- **Take a look at the paint and siding** – The "little problem turning into a big problem" idea is never more apparent than when it comes to siding and paint. I regularly get asked at inspections, "when should I replace damaged siding and paint my house?" Honestly, you can wait as long as you like but realize the longer you hold off, the larger the project is going

to be, and the more it is going to cost you. Little cracks in wood allow water to seep in and cause small areas of rot. Small areas of rot turn into big areas of rot. Big areas of rot turn into large sections of siding that need to be replaced.

- **Take a look at gutters, downspouts and drains** - I know you're thinking it is summer and you don't need these things. Well, you are going to need them in just a couple months and once it starts raining it can be a real hassle to try to work on these things. Have you ever tried to repair the pipes under a sink while the water is on?
- **Take a look in your attic and crawl space** – Someday you are going to have to sell your house and the problems in these areas can be complicated and expensive. Common problems are excess moisture damage and rodent activity. If you're not sure what or where the attic or crawl space is, have a licensed home inspector take a look.

Here are a few more things to check on as you're working around the house:

- Be sure your foundation vent covers are removed and the vents aren't blocked with debris so there will be airflow to the crawl space
- As you're checking the foundation vents be sure the screens are intact and don't have holes that rodents can get through
- Turn the hose bibs on for the season and be sure you don't have any leaks
- Check your window screens for rips, tears and sun damage
- Check all of the bedroom windows to be sure they open easily and even a small child could operate them and get out of the house quickly in an emergency
- Check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors – replace any detectors over 10 years old
- Be sure you know where the main water shut-off for your house is
- Be sure your address numbers are readily visible from the street so emergency responders could find you quickly
- Be sure all your exterior lights have functioning bulbs and operate properly
- Check your walkways for moss collection and tripping hazards

Most importantly, do this early so you have time to get outside and really enjoy your house. We only get a few months of nice weather around here so take advantage of them. Many of the things on the list above only need to be checked on every few years and will be good for a long time once setup properly.

Give us a call if you have any questions about maintaining your house and have a good summer!