

checklist

plumbing to security

These sections of coarse screen let water into the gutters but keep leaves out. They rest on top of the gutters, secured by tabs that extend under the first section of roof shingles.

NEXT, THE ROOF. Conduct your inspection early in the morning before the shingles heat up and become so gooey that you leave footprints in the tar.

Search for broken and curled shingles that often cause leaks. Look at the metal flashing around the vent stack and chimney and at roof seams. Patch any places where the adhesive has cracked. Seal liberally with roofing cement, applied with a wide, flexible-blade putty knife.

Inspect the sides of the house. Sand and scrape flaking or peeling paint. Brush on a coat of primer, and after it has dried overnight, touch it up to match the surrounding surface.

Test wood siding for decay by pressing the point of a penknife into the wood. If the point goes in easily, don't despair.

New home handyman products give you the option of repairing rotted wood instead of replacing it. Check your hardware or department store for wood filler and wood hardener.

Fill splits and parted seams in trim and wood siding with caulking com-

pound. Choose latex-base caulking, not silicone, if you plan to cover it with paint.

DON'T OVERLOOK THE putty around window glass. If it is moderately cracked but not crumbly, you can paint over it to reseal it. Otherwise, scrape all the old material away and apply fresh putty.

Your home will hold its warmth better if you repair or replace loose weather stripping around windows and doors. Consider installing storm windows and doors to keep warm air in and cold air out.

"Before ordering a storm/screen door," advises Better Home and Gardens Do It Yourself magazine, "measure the length and width of the inside of the door opening, and make sure that there is at least one inch of flat surface around the opening."

"Most doors will arrive prehung which makes installation easy. Many doors also come with step-by-step instructions. Check to make sure the door doesn't open while you're installing it."

INTERIOR CHECK

Use the following checklist when you batten down your home's hatches for winter:

ATTIC

- Check ventilation openings for nests, blockage.
- Check for any evidence of leakage.

HEATING/COOLING SYSTEMS

- Have heating system checked by serviceman.
- Remove (or winterize) room air conditioners.
- Clean all elements of cooling system.
- Check condition of hot water heater.
- Test and start humidifier.
- Check and secure dehumidifier.
- Service all radiators and valves.
- Repair breaks in insulation.
- Check condition of fireplace or wood stove.
- Lubricate all pumps, fans and motors.

HOUSE SECURITY

- Check charge on fire extinguishers and operation of smoke detectors.
- Review family fire prevention and escape plans.
- Have police and fire officials check home and offer suggestions.

EXTERIOR CHECK

Use the following checklist when you batten down your home's hatches for winter:

GROUND

- Check window wells, dry wells and storm drains.
- Seal driveway/walkway cracks.
- Check fence/wall conditions.
- Trim all trees.

FOUNDATION

- Check (during rainstorm) for proper drainage away from house and garage.
- Seal any cracks.

SIDING

- Check for finish or paint deterioration.
- Caulk joints.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Check for finish or paint deterioration.
- Exchange screens and doors.
- Check putty at windows.

ROOF

- Check for loose, damaged or missing shingles.
- Check soffits for signs of moisture buildup.
- Check condition of chimney.
- Check flashings for lifting or poor seal.
- Check all gutters and leaders.

PLUMBING

- Drain exterior water lines and open taps (in cold areas).
- Insulate water lines that are subject to freezing.

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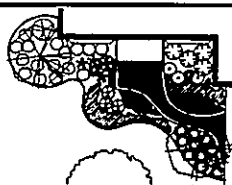
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