



Coldwell Banker Milestone Real Estate

# Concierge News

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## Yearly maintenance checklist for your summer home

**A practical checklist for keeping your vacation home safe, clean, and in working order.**

Whether it is the start of the summer season or the end of the summer season there is always maintenance to perform on your summer home. This checklist assumes your home has been shut down and closed over the fall, winter and spring. Let's start with the beginning of the summer season checklist.

1. Turn on the water. Make certain the water has not been contaminated in some way. This can especially happen when an anti-freeze is put into the pipes to keep them from freezing and bursting. Also make certain there are no leaks in the system.
2. If your summer home has air conditioning make certain this system is in good shape. Check especially for refrigerant leaks and frayed wires.
3. In a similar way, if you need to use a furnace in your summer home then check that system, especially the wiring. If it is a gas furnace make certain there are no gas leaks.
4. It is always good to check the roof for any damage. Damage can lead to, among other things, water leaks and water leaks can be devastating for any house.
5. If your summer home is not attached to a municipal sewage system, make certain your septic system works. Check to make certain the holding tank has enough empty room and if a pump is used make certain it is in good shape.
6. It never hurts to check the electrical system. In wilderness areas animals (squirrels, mice, etc) can get into the house and nibble away at the wiring. This creates a fire danger.
7. If your summer house is in a harsh winter area, check the building's foundation for leaks or holes. These holes or leaks can allow for animals to enter the building or create structural weakness in the building.
8. Check the window and door screens. On hot days you will want to use these and if they have holes in them they won't work efficiently.
9. Although it is not formally a maintenance item it may be helpful to open all the windows and doors and air out the house. Remember, the place has been closed up for a while and odors do collect.
10. You should also examine the home's exterior. You are looking for loose siding or bad paint. Fix the loose siding and if the house needs painting, then you have a summer job.

Summer is now over and more maintenance needs to be done to prepare for closing the home for the winter months.

1. Turn off the water at its source. Then drain all the water from the system by running the water in the sinks until the pipes run dry. Flush the toilets for the same reason. It is wise to drain the water heater. A tank that bursts over the winter spewing gallons of water into the house can be a nightmare when you return in the summer. If your home is in a cold weather area it is probably helpful to add some antifreeze to the system as an extra precaution, but, be very, very careful here. Make certain the antifreeze product is especially designed for potable water. Regular antifreeze used in automobiles is very poisonous and even lethal. It should never be used in systems that people will use.
2. If there are no electrical items that need to run during the off season you will probably want to turn off the electricity to the house. This helps prevent fire.
3. Likewise, you should also unplug any non-essential electrical items.
4. If you use a septic system, this is a good time to add a composting material to the system. It can work its magic over the winter.
5. Make certain all windows and doors are securely locked before you leave. This is obviously a deterrent to crime. If your home is in an isolated area you might want to consider hiring a watch service to occasionally come by and check on the property.
6. Check to make certain any water drainage systems are clean and useable. You don't need water backing up from the eaves trough under the roofing shingles.
7. You might also want to store any bedding and linens in a moth-proof place.
8. Check to see that all air vents in the foundation and roof are clear. Having some air circulate through the 'sealed up' building is important to deter humidity and mold.
9. In severe winter areas, especially where there is a lot of snow, put covers over the windows. This helps keep the snow from piling up on the window sills where it can melt and run into the house or sit on the sill and rot out the wood. If you use some prominent material like plywood it can also deter criminals breaking into the house over the winter.
10. If your summer house has a central air conditioning system make certain the outside condenser is well covered. This helps keep material out of the condenser and keeps the unit free from snow and rain.

Now that this is all done you can head for home and wait expectantly for the next summer knowing that your summer house is in good shape.

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