



Survey of House to determine repair needs

You can use the following form to assess your home (HRRC suggests you do this at least once each year.) The survey questions referring to the age of systems are intended to help you plan upcoming repair needs; if the system is functional, age alone is not a reason to replace it. General tips:

SHINGLE ROOFS:

Two layers of shingles are the maximum that should be laid (slate is heavy and should count as two layers.) If you have two layers on all/part of roof, those layers should be removed before reroofing.

To identify roof leaks: look at interior walls and ceilings under the roof and around the chimney for discoloration, plaster damage, or wet surfaces; look outside at porches and overhangs for peeling paint or rotted or sagging wood.

VALLEYS AND FLASHINGS:

Valleys are areas where different roof slopes come together, and flashings are materials (generally made of metal) that seal against water intrusion – in valleys, between the roof and adjacent house walls, and around chimneys, stack pipes, etc. Both are common areas for leakage. If the leaks are isolated to these areas, you may need to replace only the flashing. If you have the roof redone, be sure the bid includes all new flashing.

FLAT ROOFS:

Flat roofs should be checked regularly; leaks are commonly caused by problems with flashing (see above), ice build-up at the gutter, poorly-attached railing posts, and/or damage from tree limbs. Ideally, flat roofs should not be used or walked on, even if there is a door leading out. Use will cause leakage over time.

FOUNDATION:

Mortar is the cement-like material that holds bricks together. It provides support and must be maintained. If caught early, it is a relatively inexpensive job (called “tuckpointing”) that can usually be a “do-it-yourself” repair.

EXTERIOR WOOD:

Test for rot: If a knife blade can be inserted easily into the wood, you can be fairly certain there is rotted wood to be replaced. Be aware that rot can extend beyond the visible, testable area.

Sawdust: If there is sawdust around exterior wood it might be a sign of carpenter ants – they do eat wood. You may need a professional opinion.

GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS:

Gutters should be cleaned in the fall (after leaves are down), and again in the spring, if needed.

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FURNACE OR BOILER:

Read the manual on your heating system for special care instructions for your unit – they do differ. As a general rule, gas furnaces should be cleaned and checked each year by a professional, and the filters should be changed regularly during heating season. With a boiler, even if you have an automatic feed, still check the water regularly – feeds can malfunction. In some units, the sediment should be cleaned out regularly.

ELECTRICAL:

If your house has circuit breakers, metal pipe (conduit), or flat wiring in a thick plastic casing (Romex™), it indicates some updating has been done. The existence of knob and tube wiring does not necessarily indicate a need for replacement – it may be perfectly functional. However, if any of the conditions asked about in the survey indicate problems, you might want a professional electrician to evaluate your wiring, including whether the fuses are correct for the wire size. All wiring splices must be inside a junction box (work box.)

PLUMBING:

To check for leaks in pipes: check joints, under sinks, and on ceilings/walls/basement floors. To check toilets, put a few drops of food coloring into the water in the tank; wait 15 minutes, then check to see if the water in the stool is tinted the color you added. If so, the valve that seals the outflow of water from the tank into the stool should be replaced (usually, an inexpensive, do-self repair.)

BASEMENT:

Painting basement walls with waterproof paint will not solve a water problem – and, if your walls are wet, the paint is likely to peel.

SEWER SYSTEM:

Red clay drain tile is buried around the outside of your home to carry water from downspouts. Run water from a hose into each downspout for 2 - 5 minutes to check if the line is draining properly.

Interior Condition

FURNACES OR BOILERS:

1. Estimated age of heating system? _____ Is it in good working condition? yes no

Gas Furnace:

1. Does anything block the heat registers or cold air returns? yes no
2. Have you ever smelled fumes around the area? yes no
3. Does the pilot light go out often? yes no
4. Is the blower very noisy? yes no
5. Has the furnace been converted from a coal-burning model? yes no

Boiler:

1. Do you use extension cords? yes no If so, how many? _____
2. Do you have a 3-prong grounded outlet for refrigerator and in the laundry area? yes no
3. Do you have a special metal box plug for your electric dryer? yes no
4. Are all outlets near sinks or on the outside of the house controlled by ground fault circuit interrupters? yes no
5. How many service boxes do you have? _____ Are they fuses circuit breakers both?
6. How is your basement wiring run? through a metal pipe (conduit) Romex™
7. Do fuses blow or breakers trip more than very occasionally? yes no
8. Do lights flicker or appliances falter when you turn on the switch? yes no
9. Are there wires spliced together and wrapped with black tape? yes no
10. Is lamp cord used anywhere in place of regular house wiring? yes no

PLUMBING:

1. Are basement pipes copper? yes no Are the pipes going upstairs copper? yes no
2. Are there any signs of leaks or corrosion? yes no
3. Do your faucets leak? yes no Do your toilets have "ghost flushes"? yes no
3. Do you have shut off valves to all fixtures? yes no Do they work to stop water? yes no
4. Do your sink, tub, and basement drains function well? yes no

BASEMENT:

1. Are foundation blocks crumbling, or is the mortar between the blocks missing? yes no
2. Are there signs of mildew? yes no
3. Does water come in when it rains? yes no

SEWER SYSTEM:

1. Does your basement drain ever back up? yes no
2. Does your outside drain tile allow water to run freely? yes no
3. Do your yard drains drain well? yes no

Exterior Condition

SHINGLE ROOFS (house, porch, and garage):

1. Estimated age of roof? _____ Number of layers of roofing material? _____
2. Are shingles curled, missing, or worn? yes no
3. Are there signs of leakage (interior or exterior) ? yes no
4. Are there signs of rust on valleys or flashing? yes no

FLAT ROOFS:

1. Is the covering in good condition? yes no
2. Are there signs of leaking in the area directly underneath? yes no
3. If so, is any of the wood rotted? yes no
4. Are railings or posts rotted or loose? yes no
5. Are there depressions that hold water? yes no

FOUNDATION:

1. Are there broken, loose, or missing bricks? yes no
2. Is the mortar between the bricks crumbling, loose, or missing? yes no
3. Is the foundation wall bowed, or are the brick steps and/or porch sinking? yes no
4. Are stone treads broken or pitted? yes no

EXTERIOR WOOD (walls, porches, steps, garage, etc.):

1. Are wooden areas free of rot? yes no
2. Is there any sign of sawdust? yes no
3. Are trim pieces or wood shingles or siding boards missing, loose, split, or bowed? yes no

GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS:

1. Material: aluminum galvanized other (specify) _____
2. Are there any leaks or spillovers? yes no
3. Are there any rust spots? yes no
4. If so, are they soft and ready to go through? yes no
5. Are the gutters bent or pulling away from the house? yes no
6. Do the gutter boards show signs of leaking water or rot? yes no
7. Are the downspouts mortared tightly into crocks? yes no

DRIVEWAYS, WALKWAYS, AND YARD AREAS:

1. Are these surfaces slanted so rain water drains away from house and garage? yes no
2. Are there any large holes, cracks, or depressed areas? yes no

GENERAL: Age of house: _____

NOTES: _____
