



HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

HOMEOWNER'S MAINTENANCE HANDBOOK



NOTICE

The City of Wichita does not warrant or guarantee that any of the projects described herein will correct any particular homeowner's problems. The homeowner acknowledges that the City of Wichita has not performed any independent analysis of your home in connection with any of the maintenance checklists or projects contained herein. The City of Wichita advises that you consult with specialists such as plumbers, heating & air professionals, or electricians in appropriate instances. The City of Wichita does not assume responsibility for any loss or damage resulting from reliance upon the information herein.

The homeowner is expressly warned to consider and adopt all safety precautions that might be indicated by the projects described herein, wear protective safety gear, and avoid all potential hazards. By following the instructions for projects contained herein, the homeowner willingly assumes all risks in connection with repairs performed in accordance with the Homeowner Maintenance Handbook and releases the City of Wichita from all liability in connection therewith.

Dear Homeowner:

The City of Wichita is pleased to have provided you with assistance in either purchasing your home or in making repairs. In order to protect our investment and yours, and to help insure years of satisfaction with your home, we have prepared this Homeowner Maintenance Handbook. This booklet is divided into three sections for your easy reference.

Section I: Home Maintenance Checklist. This section is perfect for everyone. You don't have to be an expert in home repairs! Simply check the items on the list, according to the schedule. This will help you detect small problems before they get serious. And if you find problems while making your inspections, you may want to call a repairperson, or, you can learn how to make certain repairs by referring to Section II.

Section II: Do-It-Yourself Home Repairs: This section has information on a variety of home repairs which many people may find easy to do on their own.

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Section III: Useful Phone Numbers: We have provided you with a list of helpful City's numbers for your convenience.

On behalf of all Housing & Community Services Department staff, I wish you much enjoyment in your home!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary K. Vaughn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The City of Wichita Housing & Community Services Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION:	5
 Section I: Home Maintenance Checklist	
⌚ Preventive Maintenance	6
⌚ Checklist	7
 Section II: Do-It-Yourself Home Repairs	
⌚ Exterior Painting	9
⌚ Windows, Doors And Details	13
⌚ Exterior Walls	19
⌚ Fence Fixer	23
⌚ Lawn Care	25
⌚ Foundation Fundamentals	27
⌚ Patios, Walkways, and Drives	31
⌚ The Roof Over Your Head	33
⌚ Leaking Faucets	35
⌚ Electric Plugs	37
⌚ Bathtub and Shower Seals	39
⌚ Holes in Walls	41
⌚ Lead Paint Can Poison	43
⌚ Security	45
⌚ Smoke Detectors	45
⌚ Saving Energy	47
 Section III: Useful Phone Numbers	 Inside Back Cover

Introduction

What Is A Homeowner Maintenance Handbook?

The Homeowner Maintenance Handbook is an easy-to-use resource to help homeowners maintain their homes after receiving assistance from the City Housing & Community Services Department in purchasing or rehabilitating their home.

Why Produce A Homeowner Maintenance Handbook?

This handbook will help homeowners protect their home and the City's investment in their home.

Why Concentrate On Home Maintenance?

A home is the greatest investment a person can make. This is the place where children are born and raised, where memories are made and where retirement years can be spent. Homes that are safe and comfortable should stay that way, but everyday wear and tear must be addressed. Homes which are well maintained, make the neighborhood look good and when the neighborhood looks good, people want to live there. When people want to live in a neighborhood, property values go up and the homeowners see a great return on their investment. Home maintenance makes good personal sense, makes good neighborhood sense, and makes good economic sense.

Who Will Receive This Handbook?

Persons who received assistance from the Housing & Community Services Department home repair programs and the first time homebuyer program.

What's Next?

Turn the page and learn how to maintain your home!

Preventive Maintenance

What Is Preventive Maintenance?

Preventive maintenance means: “take care of the little things before they become **BIG PROBLEMS**”! As a homeowner, you cannot afford to sit back and wait until something breaks before you address it.

INSIDE:

Take care of household appliances (stove, refrigerator, washer, dryer), and major heating, electrical and plumbing systems, so they continue to provide you with quality services. Follow Manufacturer’s guides for regular service and maintenance, and report problems immediately, while they are small.

OUTSIDE:

Pay close attention to the outside of your house and watch for roof and gutter problems. Slow wear and tear can lead to serious, expensive problems. For example, a small roof leak that is not repaired can cause ceiling beams to warp. That could lead to cracked ceilings and inner wall damage, and that could lead to **BIG PROBLEMS**.



CHECKLIST

Following is a list of home maintenance items to check on a regular basis (seasonally or annually). If problems are noted, either make the necessary repairs or call a repairperson.

What to Check	When
<p>Foundations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ The base of your house on the outside, for soft, chipped or rotten wood which could be a sign of termites. ✿ The ground around your house to insure that it is built up around your foundation so that water runs away from the house. ✿ Interior walls and floors to see if there are signs of water damage. ✿ To see if tree roots are growing near or under the foundation. 	<p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p>
<p>Doors and Windows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Doors, windows and trim for decay or rot. ✿ Window glass for loose putty. ✿ Windows and doors for broken glass and damaged screens. ✿ Weather stripping for damage and tightness of fit. ✿ Caulk at doors, windows & all other openings & joints. ✿ Clean window and door screens. ✿ Lubricate window hardware. 	<p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall/Spring</p>
<p>Exterior Walls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Wall masonry for cracks and loose joints. ✿ Painted surfaces for chipping and peeling. ✿ Siding and trim for damage or decay. ✿ All trim for tightness of fit. 	<p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall/Spring</p>
<p>Roof:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Damaged, loose &/or bubbled shingles. ✿ Attic for water stains or dampness. ✿ Flashing damage (metal around chimney, vents, etc.) ✿ Damaged gutters, downspouts, hangers, and splash boxes. ✿ Low tree limbs brushing against roof. 	<p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>Fall</p> <p>As Needed</p>

What to Check	When
<p>Interior Surfaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ All joints in ceramic tile, laminated plastic, and similar surfaces. ✿ Caulk or grouting around tubs, showers, and sinks. 	<p>Fall Fall/Spring</p>
<p>Floors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Wear and damage, especially where one material meets another. 	<p>Annual</p>
<p>Electrical System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Condition of lamp cords, extension cords, and plugs for damage. ✿ Areas where wiring is exposed and/or damaged. ✿ Fuses or breakers, which trip frequently. ✿ If you feel a shock or tingling from touching any appliance-disconnect it immediately. 	<p>As Needed As Needed As Needed As Needed</p>
<p>Heating and Cooling System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Clean or change air filters. ✿ Clean dirt and dust from around furnaces and condensing units. ✿ Remove window air conditioner in the winter. ✿ Arrange for regular servicing by qualified professionals. 	<p>Every 30 - 45 days Fall/Spring Fall/Spring Spring</p>
<p>Plumbing System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Hoses for leaks. ✿ Water heater for leaks. ✿ Faucets for leaks. 	<p>Annual Annual Annual</p>
<p>Ground and Yard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Drain outside waterline and hoses (disconnect hoses from sill-cocks). 	<p>Fall</p>
<p>Smoke Detectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Check and replace batteries. Always replace batteries when you set your clocks back in the Fall. (See p. 45) 	<p>Fall</p>
<p>Fences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ Posts, gates and slats for deterioration. 	<p>Fall</p>

PAINTING

WHY PAINT?

If the exterior of your home is brick or siding, you won't need to paint anything but the trim. However, if your home is wood, you will need to repaint periodically to protect the wood underneath the paint. If you don't, the wood will be exposed to weather conditions, which can lead to rotting. If the wood rots and does not protect the interior of your house, there will be **BIG PROBLEMS**.

A bonus effect of painting is it makes your house look good, which could make your neighbors want to paint their houses, so they'll look good. When everyone paints, the neighborhood looks good and everyone is proud of where they live!

WHEN TO PAINT?

You should paint your house when:

- It's been longer than 5 years since you last painted.
- There is peeling, cracking or blistering of the paint on your house.

WHAT COLOR PAINT TO USE?

Choose a color with these tips in mind:

- Use a neutral color, saving bright colors for trim
- Use tones of one color with the main part in the lighter shade
- Don't use dark colors on small homes (it makes them look smaller and dark colors attract and hold heat)
- Avoid using more than three colors
- Don't forget to paint the garage, fence and other accessory buildings!



WHAT KIND OF PAINT TO USE?

There are 2 kinds of paint to select from: latex and oil based. Here is how they compare:

	PROS	CONS
Oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Covers better because it's heavier■ Helps condition old wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Hard to clean brushes and paint drips■ Takes at least 2 days for one coat to dry
Latex	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Breathes and is useful when moisture is a problem■ Colors fade less quickly■ Clean up is easier■ Dries in about 4 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ May not last as long

HOW MUCH PAINT TO BUY?

You need to know the size of your house to know how much paint to buy. Here's how you find out: (1) add the length of all sides and multiply the sum by the height of the structure. For the gable ends; multiply the height by the length and divide by 2. Add the totals together to get the total sq. ft. of the painted surface. (2) Divide the number by 300 because this is approximately how much one-gallon of paint will cover. The number you get when you divide is the number of gallons of paint you will need.

Or, you can ask the paint store salesperson!



WHAT ABOUT COST?

It's important to use a **TOP GRADE** paint so that the painting will be easier to apply, last longer and look great! Compare prices and watch for sales.

FREE PAINT!

Homeowners may be eligible to receive **FREE** paint from the City of Wichita Housing & Community Services Department's Paint Program. The City's Paint Program requires the residential dwelling to be at least 5 years old and located within a designated target area with household income within program income limits as established by HUD. For more information, call 462-3712.

WHAT TOOLS ARE NEEDED TO PAINT?

- Paint scraper to remove the old paint
- Step ladder to reach the high spots
- Sandpaper to sand down to the original wood in trouble areas
- Power sander if the trouble areas are large
- Caulking compound to patch holes and cracks
- 3 brushes:
 - 4" brush for flat surfaces
 - 2" brush for the trim
 - 1" brush for the windows
- Rollers to use with latex paint on large areas
- Roller tray to hold the paint



AFTER I HAVE THE PAINT AND TOOLS, THEN WHAT?

Get the wood ready!



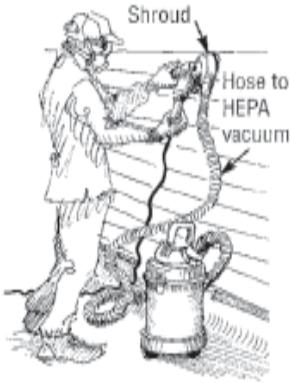
To get the wood ready you have to remove the flaking paint. Flaking is caused by moisture underneath the paint. When moisture gets under the paint and then dries, it causes the paint to shrink and swell. Then the paint pulls away from the wood. Blistering and spot peeling appears on the sides of the house where the sun's rays hit continuously. Obviously, if you want to prevent these problems from continuing, you must take steps to eliminate the moisture. Check for leakage at the gutters and eaves of the house. Once the moisture problem has been checked, you're ready to paint.

NOTE: If your home was built before 1978, there is possibility that the paint on it contains lead. If it does, you need to take special precautions. Contact a contractor qualified in "Lead Safe Work Practices" to paint your home or take a one-day training on "Lead Safe Work Practices."

Please follow these following steps when preparing surfaces for painting to comply with Lead-Based Paint safe work practices:

1. Cover the ground with protective sheeting that extends 10 feet out from work surface to protect the soil from contamination by lead-based paint chips and dust.
2. Remove all paint at least 12 inches beyond the flaking, blistering or peeling condition. NOTE: Mist small areas frequently to keep down dust. Use wet-dry sandpaper or wet sanding sponges. A power sander may be used if attached to a HEPA vacuum and the worker is wearing respiratory protection.
3. In order to avoid future moisture problems apply a coat of quality primer on all bare wood surfaces and seal cracks, holes, and seams with caulking compound. Allow the primer and caulking time to dry before applying paint.
4. Start painting! Allow the first coat to dry before applying the second coat. Cracking is caused by either applying an additional coat of paint before the previous coat has dried or by using a primer that does not work well with the finish coat.

WINDOWS, DOORS, AND DETAILS



WHY PAY ATTENTION TO WINDOWS, DOORS AND DETAILS?

For the same reason you wouldn't put on a fancy suit and worn out shoes! If you take the time to paint your house, don't forget to pay attention to the details.

Windows with weathered putty, chipped sills or jambs, and broken or cracked glass are common in many neighborhoods. This looks bad and wastes energy – the cool of air conditioning will go out the cracks in the summer, the same way the heat from your furnace will escape in the

winter.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN MAKING WINDOW REPAIRS?

Weathering of paint on windowsills and jambs, and cracking putty in windowpanes are the most common kinds of deterioration. However, both are easily fixed and not only make your house look better, but also help keep in heat and air conditioning.

Weathered putty must be replaced. First dig out the old putty with a putty knife or chisel. If it is difficult, heat it to soften it. Now roll a small piece of new putty into a rope about 3/8" round and press it along the edge of the glass firmly, hold a putty knife at an angle and flatten the putty, making a smooth finish.

HOW DO I FIX A BROKEN WINDOW?

The method for fixing a window depends on what kind you have. Most houses will have one of two types: either a wood frame or metal frame window.

WOOD FRAME WINDOWS:

1. Remove the old putty with a chisel. If it's difficult to remove, heat the putty to soften it. Remove the broken glass. Be sure to wear heavy work gloves to protect your hands when handling the glass.

2. Sand the wood on all sides where the glass will be replaced, and then paint with linseed oil or thin paint.
3. Measure each side of the window. Take your measurements to a hardware store (or glass company) and ask them to cut it about 1/8" less on each measurement to take care of irregularities in the frame.
4. Apply about 1/16" of putty on all sides. Press the glass gently into the putty until it's embedded.
5. Tap in on all 4 sides. Drive glass about halfway into the wood frame using the side of a chisel, putty knife, or screwdriver.
6. Roll a small piece of putty to make a rope about 3/8" in diameter and press it into the groove along the edges of the glass.
7. Hold a putty knife at a 45-degree angle and smooth the putty into a 45-degree angle sloping away from the glass.
8. Allow the putty to dry thoroughly (about a week depending on the weather) and then paint.

METAL FRAME WINDOWS:

1. Remove the old putty, the spring clips holding the glass, and then the broken glass.
2. Paint the frame to prevent rusting.
3. Measure the frame and have the glass cut 1/8" less than the measurements.
4. Apply 1/16" bead of putty on all sides and press the glass against it.
5. Reinsert spring clips.
6. Apply putty around the edges and pull the putty knife across it to secure and allow to dry.



HOW TO FIX A SCREEN DOOR OR WINDOW SCREEN?

Fixing holes in screens is easy if you think of the screen mesh as a piece of fabric and you are going to patch it just like patching a pair of jeans. However, a screen is only worth repairing if it is in good shape. Otherwise, go ahead and replace the screen.

HOW DO I REPAIR A SCREEN?

1. Trim out the hole or tear to a rectangular opening with an ordinary pair of scissors.
2. Using a screen mesh similar to that already on the door or window, cut a patch 2" larger in width and length than the hole.
3. Unravel the wires on each edge of the patch about ½".
4. Place the patch over the hole from the outside and push the prongs through.
5. With a helper or a piece of duct tape hold the patch from the outside, bend wires toward the center on the inside. You can finish the ends off with clear nail polish to keep them from snagging clothes.

HOW DO I REPLACE A SCREEN?

If the screen mesh is rusted, has a number of holes and tears or is loose, then you should replace it.

1. Remove the door or window screen and place it on a bench or flat surface.
2. With a putty knife, pry out the molding that holds the screen, remove tacks and discard the screen.
3. Cut the new screen mesh to the desired size. Be sure to cut square with mesh lines and make sure the mesh lays parallel to the sides of the frame before stapling. Now staple at one end.
4. If you are replacing a door screen, place a 2" board under each end of the door and secure with a clamp. This will cause the frame to bow slightly, but will make the screen tight when you door is straightened out and re-hung.
5. Pull the opposite end of the screen tight and staple. Now, beginning at the center of the sides staple the screen down, working toward the ends. Place staples about 2 inches apart. Nail molding back into place.

WHAT KIND OF PROBLEMS WITH DOORS DO I NEED TO BE AWARE OF?

A worn doorsill is one type of problem. Doorsills or thresholds receive a great deal of water and get badly worn. Here is how to replace it:

1. Remove the door from its hinges by slipping out hinge pins. You may have to remove the doorstop from the jamb with a heavy putty knife or prying tool.
2. Lift out the old sill with a crowbar or claw hammer. If it is badly worn, you can split the wood with a chisel and remove the pieces. However, it is wise to keep the sill intact as a pattern for cutting a new one.
3. Cut a new sill out of a hardwood like oak or maple.
4. Slip the new sill in place, drill holes, and countersink nails or screws.

OTHER KINDS OF PROBLEMS WITH DOORS:

- Doors that squeak
- Door knobs that rattle
- Doors that stick or drag
- Door locks that don't catch

WHAT DO I NEED TO FIX THESE TYPES OF PROBLEMS?

- Machine oil
- Graphite
- Sandpaper
- Screwdriver
- Hammer
- Pliers



SQUEAKS AND OTHER NOISE:

You can usually stop a squeaky door by putting a few drops of oil at the top of each hinge. Move the door back and forth to work the oil into the hinges. If the squeaking does not stop, raise the pin, and add more oil.

Noisy or squeaking locks should be lubricated with graphite. You can buy this at any hardware store.

To stop the rattle in the doorknob, loosen the screw on the knob. Remove the knob. Put a small piece of putty or modeling clay in the knob. Put the knob back on. Push it on as far as possible. Tighten the screw.

STICKING OR DRAGGING DOORS:

Tighten screws in the hinges. If screws are not holding, replace them one at a time with longer screws or insert a matchstick in the hole and put the old screw back in.

Look for a shiny spot on the door where it sticks. Open and close the door slowly to find the spot. Sand down the shiny spot. Do not sand too much or the door will not fit as tight as it should.

If the doorframe is badly out of shape, you may have to remove the door and cut down the part that drags.

Sand the edge of the door before painting to prevent a paint build-up, which can cause the door to stick.

LOCKS:

If the lock is tight or will not turn, lubricating it with graphite may resolve the problem, if not, replace with a new lock set.





EXTERIOR WALLS

WHY WORRY ABOUT EXTERIOR WALLS?

Many people don't worry about exterior brick walls, however lack of maintenance usually results in the bricks becoming broken and chipped. This condition detracts from the total appearance of the house. Deterioration of exterior walls not only makes a house look unkempt, but can also lead to further structural damage. A crack in the wall, however small, means it cannot do the job intended by its construction. Water can get in, causing swelling or even rotting interior framing or wall covering. Therefore, an attractive, efficient and safe home can depend heavily on routine maintenance and repair of exterior walls.

WHY DO HOMEOWNERS LET THIS HAPPEN?

Many people think this type of repair is a large task, however it is not as difficult as you might think. This handbook will show you how to repair brick walls and shingles.

WHAT CAUSES CRACKS OR SPLITS IN BRICK WALLS?

Cracks or splits in brick walls are usually caused by settlement in the foundation. If the settling has stopped, then a wall repair will solve your problem. However, if settling continues, then repair of the foundation may be needed.

HOW CAN I TELL IF THE FOUNDATION IS STILL MOVING?

With a brick wall, it is easy. Simply cover the crack with plaster of Paris, or a piece of flat glass glued down on either side of the crack with epoxy cement. If the foundation shifts, the plaster or glass will crack, settlement is a slow process and you may have to wait 2 or more months for some results.

HOW DO I REPAIR CRACKS IN MY BRICK WALL?

If the crack is in the mortar joints between the bricks, it will be easy to fix.

1. Simply chip out the cracked material with a steel chisel and heavy hammer to a depth of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Remove the mortar in small chunks but do not hit hard enough to chip the bricks. Don't drive the chisel straight in; angle it down so it will move along the joint as you hit.
2. Brush the joint with a stiff brush and wet the entire wall area with a fine spray of water. This will prevent the bricks from soaking up too much moisture from the mortar, which would cause the joint to crack again.
3. Mix mortar using a commercial dry mix, which already contains the proper blend of materials except water.
4. Now place mortar into the joints. After the mortar hardens, brush off waste. To make flush, use your trowel to cut off excess mortar.

If the wall crack is big and cut through the bricks as well as the mortar joints, you will need to:

1. Wet the crack with water.
2. Seal the lower portion of the crack with wide duct tape or a board. This will keep the grout in place.
3. Attach a tube to a funnel and stick the tube well into the cracks.
4. Pour grout into the top of the crack through a funnel and tube. After the grout has set about a day, remove covering and clean up with a trowel. Move up the wall, repeating the process until the crack is filled. Finally, use a mortar color to blend in grout with bricks.

Cracks around windows and doorframes caused by shrinking and swelling of wood create gaps, which can be repaired with a caulking compound. Always follow the directions on the package.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE BRICK IS DAMAGED OR LOOSE?

Wear eye protection before beginning this task.

1. Using a chisel, remove mortar from around the damaged brick.
2. Chip the brick until it can be removed.
3. Clean the remaining hole with a wire brush.
4. Put mortar on the bottom of the hole and press the new brick into place.
5. Fill in the top and bottom of the hole with mortar.

HOW DO I REPLACE WOOD SIDING?

1. Repairs are made by cutting out the damaged part of the board with a saw.
 2. Since the board will not simply fall away, you'll have to use a hammer and chisel to pry as much of the board away as possible.
 3. Remove the nails in the upper board. If necessary, insert wedges under the upper board and saw through the nails.
 4. Chisel out the remaining board underneath the upper board.
 5. Have a board cut the length you need and drive it in place of the old one.
- Nail with aluminum or galvanized nails. Prime and paint the board.

FENCE FIXER

What condition is your fence in? If it is wooden, are the fence posts rotting at the base? Is the whole fence beginning to sag? Or, if you have a chain link fence, is it leaning to one side? Does the gate refuse to open? If you have answered yes to any of these questions, your fence is probably in need of repair.



WHY SHOULD I REPAIR MY FENCE?

Your fence is an important part of your home. A good fence provides you with privacy where you want it, and if it is well-maintained, it improves the appearance of your home and neighborhood. A well-maintained fence also keeps your neighbors happy, and that makes for a neighborhood where people want to live.

Pet lovers like fences because a fence allows pets to be outside but restricted to your property, which also makes your neighbors happy. By contrast, a poorly maintained fence just might allow your pets to roam freely out of your yard. This can be dangerous to children, as well as seniors who are unable to defend themselves from overly aggressive animals.

WHEN TO REPAIR OR REPLACE A FENCE?

Once a year you need to examine your fence closely to discover any signs of deterioration or potential problems. If you have a wooden fence, dig away the dirt around the posts to see if they are rotting. Check the gates to determine if they are hanging properly. Are the posts aligned correctly, are nails working loose, or is the wood warping? If the answer is “YES,” you may need to make fence repairs.

WOODEN FENCE:

Most problems with wooden fences occur because the wood was not treated with a preservative. Treating a wooden fence with a preservative and then painting with an outdoor paint will reduce required maintenance. In any case a wooden fence should be painted as often as your house, about every five years. The facelift

of a fresh paint job will yield instant results!

Before painting, you may wish to compare the colors you would like with other fence colors in your neighborhood, to see if they would create a consistent look.

(Check for utilities locations prior to digging.)

WOODEN FENCE POSTS:

For fence posts rotten below ground, use two 2" x 4" boards, which are treated with a preservative and drive them into the ground on each side of the rotten posts. They should be driven at least 18" below grade. Secure the boards to the post with galvanized screws.

For fence posts with wood rotted above ground, cut the board to form an overlap joint. Secure with carriage bolts.

WOODEN GATES:

Constant slamming of the gate will cause it to eventually loosen. To help prevent this, put rubber stoppers along the board, in order to soften the blow. Once the hinges are loose, remove screws and replace with nuts and bolts. Then apply the rubber stoppers to prevent future damage.

CHAIN LINK FENCES:

Less maintenance is required with chain link fences since most of them are galvanized and not subject to rusting. However, poles can become loose and cause the whole fence to sag. When this happens, cut off the pole at ground level and either: slip a small pole into the remainder of the old one or set a larger pole over the original pole. Secure with bolts.

CHAIN LINK GATES:

If your gate is leaning or will not close properly, it is probably because the posts supporting it are loose and need to be reinforced. Secure the posts following the instructions above.

OTHER FENCE IDEAS:

If you do not have a fence, consider adding one as decoration. They can be used as an accent, such as picket fences. They are useful as screens, windbreakers, property definers, to confine pets, etc. They can be constructed out of wood or metal. Whatever you use, design them with beauty as well as utility in mind.



LAWN CARE

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN HAVING AND MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LAWN?

Lawn care is not very hard, but it will require time to get things started correctly. However, once your lawn is established and healthy, you'll spend less time working in the yard and more time enjoying it. There are 4 steps to successful lawn care:

1. Fertilizing
2. Watering
3. Mowing
4. Controlling insects and disease

WHY BOTHER TO HAVE A NICE LAWN?

You and your neighbors will be happy when your lawn is well cared for. Problems with your lawn could cause your neighborhood to look bad. In addition, weeds and other lawn diseases could infect other yards. The longer you wait, the more work it is going to require to get your lawn back into shape, so let's get going!

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

If your lawn has little or no grass, you may want to buy sod and/or grass seed to spread over needed areas. You can buy this at any home improvement or lawn and garden store. Follow directions on the package for a healthy lawn.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO KEEP A NICE LAWN NICE?

To maintain your lawn you need to know how to keep it in good shape. The following chart is a lawn care guide.

CARING FOR YOUR LAWN			
MOWING Once/twice a week depending upon rainy climate and/or your watering schedule.	FERTILIZING Fertilize every 6 to 8 weeks.	WATERING Thoroughly soak once a week. Water every 5 to 10 days in a dry period. Test your sprinkler system to ensure even coverage.	INSECT/DISEASE CONTROL Consult lawn and garden professionals for method of insect and disease control.

Another important step in lawn care is cultivation. Following are cultivation steps you should follow:

1. Trim your lawn in early spring to get rid of the dead grass.
2. Add fertilizer and weed killers.
3. If the soil is compacted you will need to aerate (punch holes throughout the ground).
4. A good time to fertilize is when you aerate. This will get the fertilizer to the roots of your grass. And don't forget the flowers!





FOUNDATION FUNDAMENTALS

WHY ARE FOUNDATIONS IMPORTANT?

A foundation is very important because the entire house rests on it. In some areas of Wichita, especially on the Northeast side, most of the homes are built upon clay dirt. The clay dirt swells up like a sponge when it rains and shrinks up when it is dry. This seasonal movement of the earth causes many houses to shift, or entire walls to crack. The strength and design of the foundation, which holds the house together, becomes very important under these conditions.

WHAT KIND OF FOUNDATION DO I HAVE?

Generally, there are two types of foundations. Check your mortgage appraisal documents if you don't know which type you have.

1. Post and Girder, or Pier and Beam Foundation.

This type of foundation holds a house up on columns, piers or posts, which are sunk deep into the ground. They rest on solid rock or other stable material. With a foundation like this, the soil can shrink and swell around the columns. Post and girder foundations are common to wood houses. In this foundation, the floors are built over large wood girders, which rest on wood posts set in 18" square bases of concrete. Pier and beam foundations consist of concrete columns or piers with a continuous concrete wall or beam running around the perimeter. You can eliminate shaking or bounces, in some cases, by driving hardwood shims between the concrete pier and the floor beam or sill. If the concrete itself is defective or deteriorating, call a qualified contractor.

2. Slab Foundation

This type of foundation is essentially just a large concrete platform. This kind of foundation is most common in new housing construction.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE FOUNDATION TROUBLE?

Your foundation will let you know if there are problems. You have to know how to listen. Following is a list of “messages” your foundation may be sending you to let you know that there might be trouble ahead:

- Ripples or wrinkles forming in wallpaper, especially around corners or along the ceiling line.
- Small cracks in the wall paint, especially around corners or along the ceiling line.
- Floors which seem bouncy or which are not level. A good way to check for levelness is to put one tablespoon of water on the floor at various spots. If the water stays in a puddle, then the floor is fairly level, if it runs, then the floor slopes. If you have carpet try using a ball instead of water.
- Structures with slab foundations will often have linoleum, vinyl or carpet floors covering placed over concrete. If either is buckled or wrinkled and you can feel something under it, then the concrete beneath is probably cracked.
- Roofing that shows unevenness or sags or other horizontal lines in the building facade may indicate foundation problems.
- Porches that sag or lean severely.
- Doors or windows which are hard to open or which drag.
- Cracks in the exterior walls.

Some of these things appear in many houses because of normal ‘settling’, however, if you notice several of these in your home, then the foundation is probably beginning to yield to various stresses or pressures in the soil. Here are some tips on how to stabilize the soil conditions around your house, which can help stabilize your foundation:

1. Improve drainage around the house. If you can get water to move away

from the building, then soil around the building will not be subject to the extremes of swelling and prolonged saturation.

2. Be careful when watering during dry periods because a swelling of the soil at one end of the house, while the other end is dry, will cause uneven movement of the foundation.
3. Control soil erosion around the home with good ground cover planting or a retaining wall.

If you have a house where foundation settlement is very noticeable, you may have a serious problem – but most foundation problems can be fixed by qualified contractors!

- Repair to pier foundation usually requires the house to be lifted on jacks to allow the piers to be replaced or repaired.
- Slab foundation repairs usually involve patching cracks that can be patched and/or repairing slab segments.

There are many reputable foundation repair firms in Wichita and the cost isn't as much as most homeowners would think. Always shop carefully for responsible contractors and check references before signing any contract.



PATIOS, SIDEWALKS, DRIVEWAYS

FIX THAT CRACK!

Does your sidewalk or driveway need repair work? (Your sidewalk is the walk that leads to your house). Cracking or sinking sidewalks and driveways are unsightly and dangerous.

SHOULD I FIX CRACKS IN MY PATIO, SIDEWALK, OR DRIVEWAY?

Before you make a decision about fixing your sidewalk, take a close look at it. If the damage is extensive, and the ground below the pavement is uneven, you might consider replacing the walk or drive entirely. Otherwise, cracks may appear again very quickly.

When you decide to replace the surface, consider whether you might prefer to use a different material. Materials such as brick or flagstones are as easy as concrete to install and maintain, and they can look much better and last longer.

Cost and availability of materials will make some difference to you. While the cost of cement of the same quality doesn't vary much, you might be able to find enough brick or stone from demolished buildings or other sources to complete your project at a minimal cost.

WHAT TOOLS WILL BE NEEDED?

You will need the following tools in order to complete a sidewalk or driveway repair. You can get them at a local hardware store.

- Wood float
- Trowel

HOW DO I REPAIR MY PATIO, SIDEWALK, OR DRIVEWAY?

Home repair of patios, sidewalks or driveways will generally take the form of patching. Patching can be done with compounds for smaller jobs and dry-mix for large jobs. For patching compounds, such as latex, vinyl, or epoxy, follow the following instructions:

1. Chisel out loose fragments, making a 1" hole.
2. Rough up the new surface and undercut the edges of the hole to help hold the new cement.
3. Wash out all loose particles and dirt, and sponge out excess water.
4. Make a thick mixture of cement and water and spread it over the damp surface.
5. Fill the hole with the patching concrete and pack it down.
6. Smooth with a wood float, then let it set for six (6) days.

This process can be used most successfully on small cracks. If there is a major crack, however, you should replace the whole section with new concrete. You may want to hire a contractor for this job.

THE ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD

WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT MY ROOF?

Many people think the roof is only necessary to keep out the rain. Unfortunately, in many cases, this is the only time that people think about their roof - when it starts leaking. As we have stated throughout this handbook, that is too late to start home maintenance – a leaking roof can mean a **BIG PROBLEM!**

Under most residential roofs are wooden supports, called rafters, that hold up the roof. These wooden beams can rot and decay if exposed to moisture over a period of time. Replacing rotted beams is both expensive and necessary, but replacement is avoidable if taken care of in time.

With careful thought given to material and color, a new roof can do much to beautify a house and the neighborhood, and increase energy efficiency.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE REPAIRING YOUR ROOF.

Before deciding to repair your roof, consider the following:

Is the roof leaking? If it is leaking you should definitely consider repairing or replacement.

How does this improvement fit into my overall plan for home improvement?

Regular home maintenance is important to avoid problems. Roofs should be checked at least once a year (in the fall) and repairs made as needed. Most roofs are guaranteed for 20 to 30 years and should not need major repairs within that time unless they have been damaged.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Roofing varies in both quality and cost and will be determined by whether you decide on a 20-year or 30-year roof.

WHAT IS THE BEST SEASON FOR REPAIRING A ROOF AND HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

The ideal time to repair or replace a roof is late spring or early fall. Time varies, but a competent roofer should be able to shingle a roof in 4 or 5 days, if all conditions are ideal.

CAN I DO THIS MYSELF OR DO I NEED A CONTRACTOR?

If you are physically unable to re-roof your home, consult professional contractors or suppliers who will advise you on your special situation. Generally, foundation work should be done prior to roofing.

WHAT TOOLS AND MATERIALS ARE NEEDED FOR DO-IT-YOURSELF ROOF REPAIR?

- A ladder that will extend safely over the roofline.
- Rubber soled shoes.
- Plywood sheets; 4' X 8' and 3/8" - 3/4" thickness.
- Shingles.

All of this equipment can be rented on a daily or weekly basis or purchased at minimal cost. The following roofing materials are available at home improvement centers or specialized roofing suppliers.

- Metal flashing to prevent leaking near edges, chimney and vents areas.
- Felt paper to line the entire roof
- Galvanized nails that are rust resistant.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST STEPS IN ROOF REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT?

After you have all your tools, inspect the present roof to determine if stripping the existing layers is necessary. The City of Wichita code does not allow more than two layers of roof shingles on a roof area. If it is determined that you will want/have to strip down to the roof rafters, drop cloths are recommended to contain debris on the ground.

Begin roofing from edges moving upwards. Several patterns may be used. Consult with your contractor or a supplier regarding particular techniques and

patterns. Try to get as many bundles of shingles on the top of the roof when working as possible and store in the area around the chimney (check for weakness prior to storing shingles in this area) - the supply company where you purchase the roof shingles may place the shingles on the roof for you - check with them at the time of purchase. Never work on the roof when it is wet or very windy. Keep a roll of plastic covering on hand for protection from sudden downpours.

Remember to cut all tree branches that scrape the new and/or repaired roof, and keep them trimmed to avoid future roof problems.



LEAKING FAUCETS

DO I HAVE TO LIVE WITH A LEAK?

NO! Leaking faucets can drive you crazy, but more important, they waste water. A dripping faucet may also cause water spots in the sink.

WHAT TOOLS ARE NEEDED TO FIX A LEAKING FAUCET?

Repairing a leaky faucet is relatively simple. First, you need the proper tools:

- A box of assorted size washers, unless you know the size.
- A screwdriver.
- An adjustable wrench.

HOW DO I FIX A FAUCET?

1. First, turn off the water at the shut-off valve nearest the faucet you are going to repair. Then turn on the faucet until the water stops flowing.
2. Loosen packing nut with a wrench. Use the handle to pull out the valve unit.
3. Remove the screw holding the old washer at the bottom of the valve unit.
4. Put in a new washer and replace the screw.
5. Put valve unit back in the faucet. Turn handle to the proper position.
6. Tighten the packing nut.
7. Turn on water at the shut-off valve.



ELECTRIC PLUGS

IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO REPAIR AN ELECTRIC PLUG ON AN APPLIANCE?

Many people find this to be an easy repair; however do not attempt it if you are not comfortable. Call an electrician.

WHEN SHOULD I CONSIDER REPLACING AN ELECTRIC PLUG?

- If lamps or appliances do not work properly.
- If the plug is damaged.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN MAKING THIS REPAIR?

1. Cut the cord off at the damaged part.
2. Slip the plug back on the cord.
3. Clip and separate the cord.
4. Tie a knot.
5. Remove a half-inch of the insulation from the end of the wires. **DO NOT CUT ANY OF THE SMALL WIRES.**
6. Twist small wires together, clockwise.
7. Pull knot down firmly in the plug.
8. Pull one wire around each terminal to the screw.
9. Pull one wire around the screw, clockwise.
10. Tighten the screw; insulation should come to the screw but not under it.
11. Place insulation cover back over the plug.



BATHTUB & SHOWER SEALS

WHY SHOULD I PAY ATTENTION TO CRACKS BETWEEN THE BATHTUB AND WALL?

When bathtubs and showers are installed, the point where they meet the wall is sealed with a substance designed to keep water from seeping between the tub and the wall. Over time, this sealant wears away and you see cracks. If there is such a crack, water can seep through and damage the wall and house frame. These cracks also trap dirt and look bad, but can be easily repaired.

WHAT WILL I NEED?

You will need something to fill the cracks. There are two types of waterproof crack fillers:

Waterproof grout: Grout comes in powder form and must be mixed with water. You can mix it in small amounts. Grout also costs less than plastic sealer.

Plastic Sealer: Plastic sealer is sold by the tube and looks like toothpaste. It is easier to use than grout, but costs more. Please read directions on the package before you begin your project.

You will also need a putty knife to remove the old grout and smooth the new.

HOW DO I REPAIR THE CRACKS AROUND MY BATHTUB OR SHOWER?

1. Remove the old filler from the crack.
2. Wash the surface to remove soap, grease, and dirt.
3. Dry the surface well before you make repairs.

USING GROUT:

- Put a small amount of grout in a bowl. Slowly add water and mix until you have a thick paste. Put this mixture in the crack with a putty knife. Press in to fill the crack. Smooth the surface.
- Wipe excess grout from the wall and tub before it dries and hardens. Let the grout dry (24 hours or more), before using the tub.
- Properly dispose of any leftover grout mixture (i.e. put in the trash). Do not pour down the drain! Wash your bowl and knife before grout dries on them.

USING PLASTIC SEALER:

You can squeeze plastic sealer from the tub in a ribbon along the crack. Use a putty knife or spatulas to press into crack. Smooth the surface. Work fast! The plastic sealers dry in minutes. Keep the cap on the tube when you're not using it.

STAND ALONE SHOWERS:

You should check the side panels of a stand-alone shower where they meet the wall to ensure the sealant has not worn away. If you see cracks, use the same steps mentioned above, to seal the area where the shower panel and the wall meet.

A HOLE IN THE WALL

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT A HOLE IN THE WALL?

We probably don't have to tell you no one wants a hole in their walls. It is unsightly, it takes away from the value of your home and it could present an opening for unwanted intruders (rodents).

HOW CAN HOLES BE FIXED?

The repair of small holes in plaster walls is not difficult if you have the right tools and materials.

WHAT TOOLS AND MATERIALS ARE NEEDED?

First, you will need to decide on a patching compound, there are two types to choose from:

1. Spackling compound is convenient for small jobs but is more expensive. It can be bought as a power or ready mixed.
2. Patching plaster can be bought in large packages and costs less.

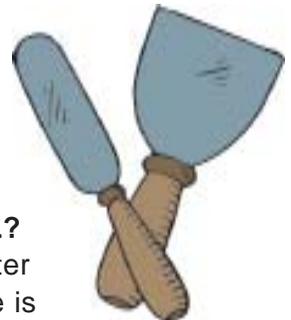
Both spackling power and patching plaster need to be mixed with water.

You will also need:

- A putty knife
- A kitchen knife
- Sandpaper, medium grit
- Old cloth or a paintbrush

WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR REPAIRING A HOLE IN THE WALL?

1. Remove any loose plaster. With a knife, scrape out plaster from the back edges of the hole until the back of the hole is wider than the front surface.
2. Thoroughly dampen the surface of the hole with a wet cloth or paintbrush.



3. Prepare patching compound according to directions on package. Mix only a small amount the first time.
4. Fill small holes with the patching mixture. Be sure to press the mixture until it completely fills the hole. Smooth the surface with the putty knife. After the patch has dried, you can sand it.
5. Large holes or cracks should be filled in phases. Partially fill the hole. Let the patch dry. This gives a base for the final fill. Add a smooth batch of compound. Let dry. Sand until smooth.
6. You may need to fill in the space behind large holes. Start patching by working in from all sides. Let dry. Apply another layer around the new edge. Repeat until the hole is filled. After the patch has dried, sand until smooth.

LEAD PAINT CAN POISON

Lead Paint in your home could poison your children:

- If your home was built before 1978, it probably has some lead paint.
- Most children are poisoned by lead dust that gets on their hands and then in their mouths.
- Lead dust comes from peeling or damaged paint or from sanding or scraping paint in older homes.
- Dirt or bare soil can also contain lead.

Why is lead paint dangerous?

People can ingest lead by breathing or swallowing lead-based paint dust or by eating lead-contaminated soil or lead-based paint chips. Household animals are also at risk.

If not detected early, high levels of lead in a child can cause serious effects, including:

- Damage to brain and nervous system
- Behavior and learning problems
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Headaches

Lead is also harmful to adults and can, among other effects, cause:

- Difficulties during pregnancy
- Other reproductive problems for men and women
- High blood pressure
- Digestive problems
- Memory and concentration problems
- Nerve disorders
- Muscle and joint pain.



MAKE YOUR HOME A HEALTHY HOME:

Here are five things you can do to protect your children from lead:

1. Keep paint in good shape.

- Check often for peeling paint.
- Inspect for water damage that can make paint peel.
- Fix problems as soon as possible.

2. Work safely and clean up if you paint or repair.

- Seal off the workspace and keep children and pregnant women away from area.
- Wet down the paint before you sand or scrap to control lead dust.
- Cover doors, windows, vents, floors and furniture with heavy plastic. If possible, remove furniture from the room.
- Clean up the work area carefully with soap and water followed by vacuuming. Dispose of all trash and dust in heavy plastic bags.

3. Keep your home free of lead dust.

- Wash floors and windows sills often with soap and water and use fresh water to rinse.
- Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter. A broom or carpet sweeper will not remove lead dust.

4. Watch where your children play.

- Look for areas with grass or other safe covering.
- Avoid bare soil.

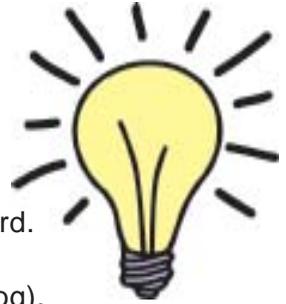
5. Test your child for lead.

- Children may not show signs of lead poisoning. Check with your doctor about having your child tested. The test is easy and inexpensive.
- Find out if your child is entitled to a free lead test. Children enrolled in Medicaid and other State health programs are.

SECURITY

A well maintained home should also be a safe home. Here are some tips for keeping your home secure:

- Lock all doors and windows when you are not at home.
- Trim shrubs that hide windows and doors.
- Install lights to illuminate the outside of you house and yard.
- Put up a “Beware of Dog” sign (even if you don’t have a dog).
- If you are going away for a few days or more, ask a neighbor to pick up your newspapers and mail and to generally watch your home for suspicious activity.
- Install a security system and keep it maintained. If possible, avoid burglar bars - these can be a hazard to you in case you need to escape a fire in your home.



SMOKE DETECTORS

The main cause of death in house fires is from breathing smoke. Put smoke detectors inside each bedroom and in or near both the kitchen and living room of your house. If the smoke detectors are battery operated, put in new batteries twice a year. (A good way to remember is change your batteries when you change your clocks in October.)

SAVING ENERGY

- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Do not let water run when you wash the dishes, brush your teeth, or do other chores.
- Plan meals so that you can bake more than one thing at a time.
- Do not use major appliances or bake during the heat of the day when you are trying to keep the house cool.
- Close the refrigerator door completely.
- Do not keep the thermostat too high in winter or too low in summer.
- Install caulking or weather stripping around your windows and doors.
- If you need to buy new appliances, get the most energy efficient ones you can afford.
- Install ceiling fans.



USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Neighborhood Improvement Services

Home Repair 462-3712

Office of Central Inspection: 268-4481

To report open or unsecured houses, broken windows, bad porches/steps, bad siding, leaking roof, bad heating, improper electrical, inadequate plumbing.

Health Department Environmental Issues: 268-8351

To report trash, debris or other bulky waste (garbage, building material, old appliances, furniture, etc.) - junk vehicles stored on premises
high weeds or grass

Zoning Issues: 268-4475

Cars illegally parked in front yard 268-4479

Houses illegally converted to multi-family dwelling

Signs in City right of way, abandoned/damaged business signs

Public Works Department Maintenance Issues:

Potholes and/or deteriorated streets 268-4071

Street Cleaning Requests 268-4026

Damaged or inoperable traffic signs/signals 268-4029

Flooding or drainage problems 268-4090

Animal Control Office 268-8473

Police Issues:

To report drug problems/activity 268-4171

To report prostitution problems/activity 268-4161

To report vandalism where the suspect is known 911

To report vandalism where the suspect is unknown 268-4221

General Police Information 268-4111

City of Wichita
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
www.wichita.gov