

Everything you need to know before you start your spring cleaning

By Lexie Heinle / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Saturday, March 21, 2015 1:00 am

If the fresh spring air and bird songs don't put you in the cleaning mood, you aren't alone. But, experts say, you should do it anyway.

In a 2013 American Cleaning Institute survey, 28 percent of those who answered said they don't do any special cleaning once spring comes. Yet a seasonal cleaning and inspection is critical for the health of your home, say home inspectors and professional cleaners.



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For instance, repairing a small cement crack can cost as little as \$6 for the sealant. But if you wait, it could cost thousands to repair a foundation. The national average is \$3,500, according to the HomeAdvisor website.

Here are some recommendations from local professionals on critical spring cleaning tasks to maintain your home.

TAKE A WALK

Take advantage of the nice weather to walk around the exterior of your home and check for damage. Look at the roof for cracked shingles, and look closely at paint, sidewalks and the foundation for cracks.

Check if your home is ready for spring rain. Local building inspector Steve Hassenstab said that water is a home's worst enemy. Water should run from gutters to downspouts and away from the foundation. Hassenstab recommends landscaping the ground around your home so it slopes away from the foundation at least 1 inch per foot to 6 feet out.

TAKE A CLOSE LOOK

After checking the exterior, do an equally meticulous check on the interior. Kris Dostal, owner of the Maids of Northwest Omaha, advises "looking up high, looking low and looking sideways." Clean those neglected areas such as the baseboards and vents. Removing the dirt and grime of the winter can help extend their life.

Toby Asplin, owner of Handyman Joes, advises homeowners to clean dryer vents and check their

washing machine's hoses for lime build-up. Maintaining those areas can help prevent fire or water damage.

DON'T FORGET

Water damage also can occur if you forget to adjust your central humidifier's settings. Asplin said his business gets two or three calls during spring cold snaps about condensation on the bathroom vents, which can stain ceilings. The condensation is caused by the humidity setting being too high for the temperature.

Asplin and Hassenstab also recommend that homeowners test their sump pumps, if accessible, before the spring rain comes. Pour some water into the sump pit to ensure that the pump is working properly.

SHOW A LITTLE LOVE

Spring cleaning is a good time for one deep clean. Move appliances and vacuum or clean those usually hidden areas, including the refrigerator's condenser coil. Vacuum your mattress and flip it, unless the mattress tag warns against that.

Outside, you should wash out the garage and rinse off the sidewalks to prevent the de-icing road mixture from damaging the concrete. Also, take care of your neglected landscaping by trimming bushes or trees. Check your sprinkler system, as sprinkler heads, buried by snow, could be damaged.

MAKE A CALL

During your inspection, you might find some tasks that are beyond your skill. Call a professional to ensure that the job is done right. Asplin recommends an inspection of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning units every six months.

Remember that a small repair now may save you a costly one later.

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