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HOME MAINTENANCE MISTAKES WILL COST YOU

“Mr. Fix-It” Lou Manfredini Reveals Common Homeowner Mistakes and Solutions

ST. PAUL, Minn. — October 5, 2011 — It may be easy to turn a blind eye when it comes to basic home maintenance, especially if there is nothing visibly wrong around the house. However, neglecting routine upkeep and cutting corners may end up costing you in the long run.

“Very often, homeowners miss the warning signs that there is a problem or look for a short-cuts to save money around the home,” warns Lou Manfredini, host of *House Smarts TV* and home improvement contributor on NBC’s *Today Show*. “However, emergency repairs can end up costing more in the long run, so it’s important to be aware of common home maintenance mistakes.”

To help avoid costly home repairs, Manfredini offers these suggestions to easily avoidable homeowner mistakes:

MISTAKE 1: Failing to drain the water heater and ignoring crackling and hissing noises

- Many homeowners neglect to drain their hot water tanks each year without realizing the importance of this task. Hot water tanks are constantly working and, as a result, sediment collects along the bottom of the tank causing the unit to use more energy to heat water. By draining tanks annually, homeowners are able to enhance the efficiency of their machine and prolong the life of the unit. Also listen for unusual crackling and hissing sounds, which may be the result of water dripping through small leaks in the water heater onto the burner plate. Consider these sounds a warning sign, and consider purchasing a new heater immediately. It’s less expensive to replace the heater now than it will be to call your plumber for an emergency visit when your tank fails.

MISTAKE 2: Painting bare wood without applying primer

- While all-in-one paint and primer sounds quick and easy, it is always important to use a high quality primer on bare wood first. To achieve a lasting paint job, scrape away any loose paint, sand until smooth, and *then* apply the primer. This will prevent moisture from seeping into the wood and provide a smooth foundation for painting. After all, starting with a quality paint job may require less touch ups later.

MISTAKE 3: Forgetting to change heating and cooling system filters regularly

- Homeowners should change the filters in the heating and cooling system at least every three months, as recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency¹. Failing to do so may cause the system to work harder and run longer, costing homeowners more in energy costs and repairs over time. Upgrading to a high performance filter, such as a Filtrete Elite Allergen Reduction Filter from 3M, will help maintain airflow in systems, helping to prevent stress on the system and reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and cool the home. It will also help capture up to 94 percent of the large airborne particles from the air passing through the filter.

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cf6618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/12442b82bfbd8047852575b4005722bd!OpenDocument>

MISTAKE 4: Overlooking foggy windows

- Fog is warm moist air coming into contact with cold air. If the home's insulated glass windows are fogging up, there is a good chance the seal is broken. When the seal is compromised, warm and cool air come in direct contact creating a condensation or fog between the panes. Window seal failure causes energy to escape, which could drive up your heating and cooling bills. There are some professional services that can remove the fog and re-seal your glass. Otherwise, the broken window sash will need to be replaced.

MISTAKE 5: Ignoring curling roof shingles

- Check your roof twice a year by standing approximately 50 feet away from the home and looking for curled shingles. Curled shingles usually mean there's a leak in the roof, which could be causing damage to the home. This is a sign that your roof's life is near its end. Call a licensed roofing contractor to inspect the roof more thoroughly, assessing whether the area can be repaired or replaced altogether.

MISTAKE 6: Neglecting loose tiles and gaps in grout

- The grout in between the bathroom tiles should be checked annually, especially around wet areas. Gaps in grout can result in water seeping behind the tiles, causing damp patches, risk of water leaking into other rooms and loose tiles. This situation is also a recipe for mold, rot and bugs. Often times you can just remove a few courses of the tile until you reach a solid run, rather than replacing all tiles in the bathroom.

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About Lou Manfredini

Lou Manfredini has been a professional homebuilder and remodeler for over 25 years. His knowledge of homes, inside and out, lets him take the intimidation out of any project. Since 1995, homeowners have been calling in to Lou's three-hour *Mr. Fix-It* program on WGN radio in Chicago. He is a regular contributor to NBC's *Today Show*, as well as a home improvement editor for *USA Weekend Magazine*. He is also one of the executive producers and host of the nationally syndicated news magazine TV show *HouseSmarts*, and *The HouseSmarts Radio Show*.

About 3M

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