

Keep it Maintained:

Ways to help keep your home in good condition



Whether you rent or own, keeping your home well-maintained is essential for the health and well-being of everyone living there. Both the inside and outside need regular attention to support a safe, healthy environment.

Here are key systems to focus on:

Check

Action

HVAC

Ventilation

Exhaust

- Service your HVAC system yearly; change filters every 2–3 months using high-quality pleated ones.
- Keep indoor temps cool and humidity between 30–50% (use a humidity gauge).
- Inspect water heaters, appliance connections, and septic tanks; pump tanks as needed.
- Open windows and doors for airflow.
- Clean exhaust fan outlets, attic fans, and vents regularly.
- Ensure cooking hoods, exhaust fans, and dryers vent outside and work properly.
- Use fans during and 10–15 minutes after cooking or showering.
- Never use a stove or oven to heat your home.

Here are key outside areas to focus on:

Check	Action
Roof & Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check that siding, roof, and foundation are in good condition with no holes, cracks, or leaks.• Clear gutters and drains; direct downspouts away from the foundation.• Inspect chimneys yearly.• Trim bushes 2–3 feet from the home and keep the yard tidy.• Watch for standing water, pests, and wildlife.
Painted Areas	
Gutters	
Landscape	
Outside Structure	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure sewer caps are secure and odor-free.• Avoid chipping or flaking paint—homes built before 1978 may contain lead.• If lead is suspected, contact a professional.• Be aware of nearby hazards like deteriorating buildings, low utility lines, highways, and industrial sites.

Here are key inside areas to focus on:

Check	Action
Overall Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Windows should be free of flaking paint or dust—test children for lead if present.• Fix leaks and water stains quickly.• Seal wall cracks, which may indicate foundation issues.• Test water for lead or contaminants.• Use low- or no-VOC paint.
Interior	
Household Items	
Basement	
Other Exposures	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use snap/sticky traps instead of pesticides.• Some household and cultural items (e.g., pottery, toys, spices, cosmetics) may contain lead. Avoid and test suspect items if concerned.• Clean, vacuum and check for pests in the basement regularly.• Watch for asbestos, radon, and sewer gas. Don't disturb possible asbestos.• Test for radon.• Run water weekly through unused sinks to block sewer gas.• Address any sewage odors promptly.

Learn More!

Check out our other Keep-it Principle factsheets to learn more about how to create a safe and healthy home for everyone in it – including your pets. For more tips and resources, visit the national PEHSU website at PEHSU.net.



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