

# Now That You've Bought Your Home

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## Your Guide to Protecting Your Investment

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**Congratulations on your new home!** We're honored we were part of your home-buying journey. Now that you've closed, it's time to think about protecting your investment for years to come.

This guide covers essential maintenance tasks, when to call professionals, and how Calhoun Inspection Services can help you maintain your home's value and safety.

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## Part 1: Your First Month Checklist

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### Change Your Locks

The previous owners had keys to your home. Consider changing the locks or rekeying them for peace of mind. This typically costs 100–300 and takes a few hours.

### Update Your Address

Notify your utility companies, insurance provider, mortgage lender, and the post office of your new address. Set up automatic bill payments to ensure nothing gets missed.

### Test All Systems

Walk through your home and test every light switch, outlet, faucet, and appliance. Check that your heating and cooling systems work properly. If you notice anything unusual, document it and contact the appropriate professional.

## Review Your Inspection Report

Read through your inspection report carefully. Highlight any items that need attention and prioritize them based on safety and urgency. Keep this report in a safe place — you'll reference it often.

## Create a Home Maintenance Binder

Start a physical or digital folder for all home-related documents: inspection report, warranty information, appliance manuals, contractor contact information, and receipts for repairs. This becomes invaluable when you sell or need to reference past work.

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## Part 2: Seasonal Maintenance Schedule

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### Spring

**HVAC System:** Have your air conditioning system professionally serviced before the warm season begins. A technician will clean the coils, check refrigerant levels, and ensure everything runs efficiently. Cost: 100–200.

**Gutters and Downspouts:** Clean out leaves and debris from gutters and downspouts. Clogged gutters can cause water damage to your roof, siding, and foundation. If you're not comfortable on a ladder, hire a professional (150–300).

**Exterior Inspection:** Walk around your home and look for cracks in the foundation, damaged siding, or loose shingles. Address any issues before they worsen.

**Landscaping:** Trim tree branches away from your roof and siding. Overhanging branches can damage your roof during storms and provide pathways for pests.

### Summer

**Deck and Patio:** Inspect wooden decks for rot, loose boards, or damaged railings. Seal or stain your deck every 2–3 years to prevent weather damage. Cost: 500–2,000 depending on size.

**Roof Inspection:** Look for missing or damaged shingles, especially after storms. If you notice significant damage, call a professional roofer immediately.

**Plumbing:** Check for leaks under sinks and around toilets. Look for water stains on ceilings or walls that might indicate hidden leaks. Small leaks are inexpensive to fix; large ones are not.

**Exterior Paint:** Check for peeling paint on trim and siding. Paint protects your home from moisture and weather damage.

## Fall

**HVAC System:** Have your heating system professionally serviced before winter. A technician will check your furnace, clean filters, and ensure your system is ready for cold weather. Cost: 100–200.

**Gutters and Downspouts:** Clean gutters again before winter. Leaves and debris can trap moisture and cause ice dams, which lead to roof leaks and water damage.

**Chimney Inspection:** If you have a fireplace, have your chimney professionally inspected and cleaned annually. Creosote buildup is a fire hazard. Cost: 150–300.

**Weatherproofing:** Caulk gaps around windows and doors. Check weatherstripping and replace if damaged. This prevents heat loss and reduces your energy bills.

## Winter

**Roof Snow Removal:** After heavy snow, consider having snow removed from your roof to prevent ice dams and excess weight damage. Cost: 300–800 depending on roof size.

**Pipe Insulation:** Insulate exposed pipes in unheated areas (attic, crawlspace, basement) to prevent freezing and bursting. Cost: 50–200.

**Foundation Inspection:** Look for new cracks or water seepage in your basement or crawlspace. Address any issues immediately.

**Indoor Air Quality:** Change your furnace filter every 1–3 months during heating season. A clean filter improves efficiency and air quality.

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## Part 3: Annual Maintenance Tasks

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Task	Frequency	Estimated Cost	Why It Matters
HVAC System Service	Twice yearly (spring & fall)	100–200 per visit	Prevents breakdowns and extends system life
Gutter Cleaning	2–4 times yearly	150–300 per cleaning	Prevents water damage to roof and foundation
Chimney Inspection & Cleaning	Annually	150–300	Prevents fire hazards and improves efficiency
Roof Inspection	Annually	150–300	Catches damage early before it becomes expensive
Plumbing Inspection	Annually	100–200	Identifies leaks and prevents water damage
Electrical Inspection	Every 3–5 years	150–300	Ensures safety and identifies hazards
Foundation Inspection	Annually	0 ( <i>DIY</i> ) or 200–\$500 (professional)	Catches settling, cracks, or water issues early
Appliance Maintenance	Per manufacturer	Varies	Extends appliance lifespan and prevents breakdowns

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## Part 4: When to Call a Professional

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### Plumbing Issues

Call a plumber immediately if you notice:

- Water leaks under sinks, around toilets, or from pipes
- Slow drains or backups in multiple fixtures
- Discolored water or unusual odors

- Water stains on ceilings or walls (sign of hidden leaks)

**Cost:** 150–300 for diagnosis and repair; emergency calls cost more.

## Electrical Problems

**Call a licensed electrician if you notice:**

- Outlets or switches that don't work
- Flickering lights or dimming when appliances turn on
- Burning smells near outlets or the electrical panel
- Frequently tripped circuit breakers
- Sparks or arcing when plugging in devices

**Cost:** 100–200 for diagnosis; repairs vary.

## HVAC Issues

**Call an HVAC technician if:**

- Your heating or cooling system won't turn on
- You notice unusual noises or smells
- Your system is running but not heating or cooling effectively
- You see leaks around your furnace or air handler

**Cost:** 100–200 for service call; repairs vary.

## Roofing Problems

**Call a roofer if you notice:**

- Missing, cracked, or curled shingles
- Leaks or water stains on ceilings
- Granules in your gutters (sign of aging shingles)
- Sagging roof sections
- Damaged flashing around chimneys or vents

**Cost:** 150–300 for inspection; repairs range from 500–5,000+ depending on damage.

## Foundation Issues

**Call a foundation specialist if you notice:**

- New cracks in the foundation (especially horizontal cracks)
- Water seepage or dampness in the basement
- Doors or windows that stick or won't close properly
- Uneven floors or sloping
- Cracks in interior drywall

**Cost:** 200–500 for inspection; repairs can be expensive.

## Pest Control

**Call a pest control professional if you notice:**

- Termite damage (hollow-sounding wood, mud tubes)
- Carpenter ant activity
- Rodent droppings or signs of infestation
- Unusual insect activity

**Cost:** 300–500 for initial treatment; ongoing service varies.

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## Part 5: Your Inspection Report — What It Means

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Your home inspection report documents the condition of your home at the time of inspection. Here's how to use it:

**Priority 1 — Safety Issues:** These require immediate attention. Examples include electrical hazards, gas leaks, or structural damage. Address these within days or weeks.

**Priority 2 — Major Systems:** These affect your home's comfort and value. Examples include roof leaks, HVAC failures, or plumbing issues. Address these within months.

**Priority 3 — Maintenance Items:** These are normal wear and tear that should be maintained. Examples include caulking, painting, or filter changes. Address these as part of your regular maintenance schedule.

**Priority 4 — Cosmetic Issues:** These don't affect safety or function. Examples include minor paint chips or small dents. Address these as budget allows.

Keep your inspection report accessible. When you hire contractors for repairs, share relevant sections of the report so they understand the full context.

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## **Part 6: Protecting Your Home's Value**

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### **Document Everything**

Keep receipts and photos of all repairs and improvements. This documentation increases your home's value and is essential when you eventually sell.

### **Stay on Top of Maintenance**

Deferred maintenance is one of the biggest value killers. A home that's well-maintained commands a higher price and attracts more buyers.

### **Upgrade Strategically**

Not all upgrades add equal value. Kitchen and bathroom renovations typically return 50–80% of their cost. Consult with a real estate agent before making major improvements.

### **Keep Your Systems Updated**

Older HVAC systems, roofs, and water heaters should be replaced before they fail. A new roof or HVAC system adds significant value and peace of mind.

### **Maintain Curb Appeal**

Your home's exterior is the first impression. Keep landscaping neat, paint fresh, and siding clean. These low-cost improvements pay dividends.

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## Part 7: Future Inspections and Calhoun Inspection Services

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### When to Schedule Another Inspection

**Warranty Inspection (11 months after purchase):** If you bought a new construction home, schedule a warranty inspection at the 11-month mark. Your builder's warranty expires at 12 months, and this inspection identifies defects covered under warranty so repairs are free to you.

**Pre-Listing Inspection (before selling):** When you're ready to sell, a pre-listing inspection identifies issues upfront so you can fix them on your terms and price your home accurately.

**Periodic Inspections (every 5–10 years):** Even if you're not buying or selling, a professional inspection every 5–10 years can identify developing issues before they become expensive.

### Why Choose Calhoun Inspection Services?

We've been serving the Chicagoland area since 2016 with over 800 five-star reviews. Here's what sets us apart:

**Educational Approach:** We don't just hand you a report — we walk you through your home, explain every finding, and answer all your questions. You'll understand your home better after our inspection.

**Fast Reports:** We deliver comprehensive digital reports within 2 hours of inspection completion. In a competitive market, speed matters.

**Thorough Documentation:** Our reports include detailed photos, video documentation (including roof videos), and clear explanations of every finding.

**Specialized Services:** We offer WDO/termite inspections (required for VA loans), mold inspections, pre-listing inspections, warranty inspections, and multi-unit inspections.

**Local Expertise:** We know the Chicagoland area intimately and understand the specific challenges homes face in our climate and region.

## Contact Us

**Phone:** 708-491-6352

**Website:** calhouninspection.com

**Email:** calhoun.inspection.services@gmail.com

**Service Area:** Chicagoland and surrounding suburbs

We're here to answer questions about your inspection report or to schedule your next inspection. Don't hesitate to reach out — we're always happy to help.

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## Part 8: Emergency Contacts & Resources

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Keep these numbers handy for emergencies:

Service	When to Call	Emergency Number
Plumber	Water leaks, no water, sewage backup	24/7 emergency plumber
Electrician	Electrical fire, sparks, no power	24/7 emergency electrician
HVAC	No heat in winter, no AC in summer	24/7 HVAC service
Roofer	Roof leak, missing shingles	Local roofing company
Gas Leak	Smell of gas	Call 911 immediately
Fire	Any fire	Call 911 immediately
Flooding	Basement flooding	Call 911 if safety risk; then call plumber

### Helpful Resources:

- **HomeAdvisor.com:** Find vetted contractors and get cost estimates
  - **Angie's List:** Read reviews from homeowners who've used local contractors
  - **YouTube:** Search for DIY maintenance tutorials (for non-emergency tasks)
  - **Your Local Library:** Many libraries offer free home maintenance workshops
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## Final Thoughts

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Congratulations again on your new home! Homeownership is rewarding, and with proper maintenance, your home will remain a safe, comfortable, and valuable asset for years to come.

We're grateful we were part of your home-buying journey. If you have questions about your inspection report, need recommendations for contractors, or are ready to schedule a future inspection, please don't hesitate to reach out.

### **Calhoun Inspection Services**

Giving customers peace of mind one inspection at a time since 2016.

708-491-6352 | [calhouninspection.com](http://calhouninspection.com)

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*This brochure is provided as a general guide. Always consult with licensed professionals for specific advice about your home. Calhoun Inspection Services is not responsible for any issues that develop after the inspection or for work performed by third-party contractors.*