



SEASONAL CHECKLIST

SUMMER

INSPECTING AND MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

In summer, opportunities to relax are hard to resist. But you can't neglect the upkeep of your home! The warm weather is also the perfect time to tackle outside projects.

OUTSIDE



After a violent storm or period of strong winds, give your roof covering the once-over. Take the required corrective action immediately if you see that shingles or metallic flashing have lifted up or possibly even been torn away. Also check the condition of the covering if a tree branch has fallen on the roof.

If you have a flat roof with an asphalt and gravel covering, make sure the gravel is evenly distributed and protects all parts of the membrane from UV radiation. If there are areas where the tarpaper is showing through, you need to add gravel. If there is still stagnant water on the roof 48 hours after rainfall ends, contact a roofer.

Collect rainwater by connected a barrel to a downspout. Cover the barrel with a fine screen to keep biting insects from proliferating.

Check tree branches, climbing plants and bushes. Plan to trim them if any of them are:

- in contact with the building;
- blocking any air intakes or outlets (e.g., air exchanger or dryer exhaust vent);
- near the heat pump (if you have one).

Be careful near power lines! To understand the risks and learn what tree-pruning work you're allowed to do by law, visit this [Hydro-Québec Web page](#).

Clean the dryer, air exchanger and bathroom fan exhaust vents. Make sure the flappers are working properly and will keep insects, birds and other small animals out.

Seal any openings in the exterior cladding to keep small animals (e.g., squirrels, bats) or insects (e.g., ants, wasps) from getting in.

Inspect all wooden parts of fencing, decking, stairs, exterior cladding, etc. Summer is the ideal time to strengthen or restore them.

Find and repair, using the appropriate products, any cracks in asphalt or concrete surfaces. This will prevent water infiltration during freeze/thaw cycles.

Replace damaged interlocking pavers or concrete flagstones and, if necessary, fill in their sand seals.

If you're planning to paint or stain your wood deck or fencing, check the weather forecast carefully: these products shouldn't be applied on a hot, humid day, and not in frost conditions either:

- Choose a day that isn't too hot;
- Wait until the morning dew evaporates;
- Work on surfaces that are in shadow.

Connect your pool filter to a timer. Besides eliminating the noise from the pump at times, this will generate appreciable energy savings over a full season, whether you have an above-ground or in-ground pool.

Once a month, check that all the ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) on your exterior outlets are working properly: plug in a nightlight or lamp and press the "Test" button: the "Reset" button should pop out and the light should go out. If not, contact an electrician. If the GFCI is working properly, press the "Reset" button to reactivate the outlet.

To help ensure your home's safety, immediately replace any burnt-out exterior bulb, preferably with an energy-saving model. Consider installing a timer or photocell control system so that the lights turn on in the evening even when you are away.

If you have children's play equipment (e.g., swing set, slide), periodically test it to make sure it is solidly anchored. If there is a sandbox, cover it (e.g., with a custom-fitted covering or a mosquito screen) so that it doesn't become an open-air litterbox. Periodically disinfect the sand or (even better) replace it.

Do a safety inspection tour of the property:

- Check all gates to the backyard;
- Check automatic locking systems (e.g., blocking access to the swimming pool or childproofing a staircase);
- etc.

Make sure equipment and accessories that could pose a threat to child safety are under lock and key; e.g., the garden shed, where hazardous materials like fuel or pesticides may be stored.

Mow the lawn once the grass reaches 4½ in. (11 or 12 cm), never cutting more than a third of its total length, so that you leave a height of 3 in. (7.5 cm).

Mowing too short leaves the lawn fragile and vulnerable to dryness, weed infestation, etc.

If you have a mower that mulches, leave the cuttings on the lawn; you will reduce the need to fertilize by 30%.

Your lawn needs about 1 in. (2.5 cm) of water per week. If there is no rain, this corresponds to a few hours' watering, ideally in the early morning. Place a few containers of identical dimensions in different spots around the lawn, and stop watering once they fill up with the recommended amount of water.

If your lawn has a chafer (white grub) infestation, in mid-August (a few weeks after their eggs are laid) treat them using nematodes (you can buy them at a garden centre). These parasites will eliminate the chafer larvae.



INSIDE



Make sure to maintain the relative humidity in your basement as close as possible to 50%. To do so, make sure the basement and/or crawlspace are properly ventilated. Note, however, that during heat waves, when both the temperature and humidity are extremely high, it's best to close all windows and air vents.

To keep condensation from forming in warm weather, wrap cold-water pipes in insulating sleeves.

To prevent mould from growing on basement walls and floors that are affected by condensation, move furniture away from the exterior walls, and open the doors of any cupboards adjoining those walls to help surfaces dry out.

Pour water into the floor drains and plumbing fixtures that don't get much use during the summer, to restart siphons and prevent unpleasant odours.

Attend to your air-conditioner maintenance. Clean or replace the filter and clean the evaporator coil. If required by the manufacturer, lubricate the fan.

Inspect the filters on your range hood and bathroom fans and replace them if necessary.

If you haven't done this in the spring, August is an excellent time to have your central heating system inspected, cleaned, calibrated, repaired, or modified.

Summer is also an opportune time for chimney sweeping.