

ACCURATE INSPECTIONS
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NEW HOME
OWNERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

OWNERSHIP

- Water & Sewer bills - In the City of Chicago the bill comes twice a year. Bill payment varies in the suburbs. Check with your local village to have service put into your name and verify payment times.
- Property Taxes - In Cook County the bill comes twice a year. Once in spring, once in fall. If the property taxes are not part of an escrow account as part of your monthly mortgage, consider 'saving' some or all of the money in a separate account monthly. Doing so may help avoid 'bill shock' or late fees.
- Ask the seller to provide manufacturer & contact information about any custom items, warranties or appliances. This will make getting service or parts much less stressful.
- Call it what you want, Murphy's Law, Karma, etc. chances are something will break the day after the closing.
- If you need new garbage cans, call your local alderman's office or 311 in the City. In the suburbs you will typically need to go to the Village hall and request new garbage cans.
- You will need to call Nicor or People's Energy, Com Edison, phone, cable and internet service providers to set up new accounts. Phone and internet providers vary in different parts of the City and suburbs. You may not be able to keep your current provider depending on location.
- It can take the Post Office a few days to a week to change your mail delivery. Try to submit your change of address form as soon as possible.
- If you move into a neighborhood with residential permit parking, you'll need to get parking permits for your windshield and for visitors. If you don't have a permit you run the risk of getting parking tickets. In order to get 'zone stickers', you will also have to pay off any outstanding parking tickets and show a receipt for a city sticker. Zone stickers can be picked up at the alderman's office.

INTERIOR

- Test smoke detectors monthly. Change batteries at least 1-2 times a year or as needed. Many smoke detectors will beep intermittently if the battery is weak. Some detectors should be mounted high, within 4"- 12" of the wall/ceiling intersection.
- If you have purchased a home with an empty basement and are considering finishing that basement and there is any question at all about whether the basement takes in water, it is recommended that you wait at least one full year before remodeling the basement. This allows you to go through an entire seasonal cycle to determine if water does or doesn't actually enter the basement during all seasons. Typically spring and fall are the most crucial times.
- If you smell dampness or high humidity in your home that seems new, take a look around the kitchen, bath and plumbing areas. Check drains under sinks; caulk seams along tubs and showers; check radiators and humidifier lines. Consider calling a plumber if the smell continues.
- If you see yellowish stains or a white powdery substance above or around windows on drywall or plaster along outside walls, there's a good chance you have a wall leak. Assess and repair or call for assistance
- Do not run a whole house (exhaust type) fan when you have a fireplace burning. Running a whole house fan will create negative pressure in the house. Such pressure can draw embers out of the fireplace and cause a fire.

PERIODIC / ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- Clean out gutters and bottoms of downspouts in the spring and end of fall.
- Change furnace filters.
- Check and change batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Prime basement floor drains or seldom used sinks periodically.

EXTERIOR

- Bushes should be trimmed properly so as to not touch the building wall. When plants are in contact with your building walls, they can cause direct water transfer to the wall and eventual erosion or rotting.
- Barbeque grills, whether gas or charcoal should not be set on wood or other combustible material decks. Keep grills at least 12" or more away from walls.
- Barbeque grills, whether gas or charcoal, when in use should not be set up against a wall or a railing system. Flame flare-ups could cause fire or heat damage to the wall or railings.

EXTERIOR continued

- Tree branches should be trimmed so that they do not make direct contact with the roof, walls or overhang. Tree branches extending over roofs can lead to premature shingle deterioration. Tree branches can also act as a pathway onto and into your home for squirrels or other rodents.
- Flaking paint on woodwork should be scraped, primed and repainted to the extent possible. Allowing bare wood to go exposed for too long will lead to early deterioration and more costly repairs.
- If you need to do concrete repairs around your property, remember that conventional concrete will not hold up if less than 2" thick. For patching or skimming thin areas look into using various types of acrylic or epoxy type concrete alternatives.
- Having trouble getting your keys in and out of your exterior locks? Try spraying some WD40 or 4-in-one oil onto a key and sliding it in and out of the problem lock a few times. The purpose isn't to lube the key but to use the key to get the lube into the lock. Keys tend to pickup particles of dust/dirt when in our pockets, purses or cars. This 'dirt' gets transferred into the lock, making it difficult to operate.
- Do you have a lawnmower or snow blower? At the end of each equipments' seasonal use pour a recommended amount of fuel stabilizer into the gas tank and run motor as recommended. This will make it much easier to start the engine next season. Fuel stabilizer can be purchased at most Auto parts stores. If you leave the lawnmower outside over the winter, cover it with a tarp to minimize corrosion.
- When rerouting downspouts away from foundation walls, be sure not to create a trip hazard by running downspout extensions across sidewalks or walking paths.
- Upper roof area gutters should have downspouts run to lower roof area gutters at the very least. Upper roof area gutters should not be allowed to drain directly onto lower roof shingles. The downspouts may not appear attractive to some. However, improper drainage can seriously reduce the life expectancy of roofing shingles and other materials. Depending on the roof size and configuration you may need to run separate gutters from upper roofs to the ground to reduce ice damming.
- Bark or dirt that is in contact with the bottom of wood siding walls can transfer 'mold' to the wood siding. When gardening attempt to keep bark, dirt and other organics away from wood siding or trims.
- Little saplings grow into big trees, when planting a sapling, don't just think about its position now but how it will be positioned in relation to the house and other items in a few years when it is a tree. Trees need room to grow.