

SPRING MAINTENANCE TIPS FROM OUR LOCAL HOME INSPECTORS

BY ROLY & SUE WIGHT, CLEARVIEW HOME INSPECTION

For many folks, spring marks the return to seasonal cottages or the more frequent and full use of the cottage. Excitement is in the air as plans are made for the cottage opening weekend, renovations and improvements are scheduled, and maintenance is anticipated. In preparation for spring, here are a few tips from our local cottage country home inspectors!

TURNING ON THE ELECTRIC PANEL:

1. Assess the meter, mast and lines to ensure no damage has occurred. If there is visible damage or you suspect damage, call your power utility. Do not take any chances!
2. Before turning on power, assess all indoor and outdoor wiring for damage (i.e. water or rodent damage).
3. Ensure that all individual breakers are off at the panel before you turn on the main breaker. Power surges may cause damage to appliances.
4. The hot water heater breaker must be off. If you turn the breaker on and the tank is empty, the heating element will burn out and need replacement.
5. After turning on the main breaker, flip the other ones on one at a time.
6. Inspect all wiring again once power is on to ensure there are no problems.

INSPECT PROPANE HEATING SYSTEM & APPLIANCES:

1. If you did not use your propane furnace or appliances over the winter you may want to consider an annual inspection by a licensed heating contractor for peace of mind.
2. Inspect the tank and all connections to ensure there is no damage.
3. Prior to turning on the furnace ensure all propane appliances are off, the windows are open, and the area is well ventilated.
4. Test the lines and connections for leaks by washing them with soapy water. If you see bubbles there may be a leak, in which case turn off the propane and call a licensed contractor. (Note: a rotten egg smell can also indicate a leak).
5. Again, before you turn on a propane water heater ensure the tank is full so you do not burn out the element.

INSPECT YOUR PROPERTY FOR HAZARDS:

1. Look for any damage or potential for damage on your property.
2. Assess for any trees and/or hydro lines that pose a safety hazard and call appropriate service(s) to have them safely taken care of before a problem occurs.
3. Look for tripping hazards and holes that may have developed due to run off or winter damage.

WOOD STOVE AND CHIMNEY INSPECTION:

1. Prior to using your wood stove assess the chimney for damage (from ice, snow or trees), movement, or loose connections.

2. Check the chimney to ensure no rodents have taken up residence over the winter. If so, evict them and their belongings!
3. As per WETT regulations, chimneys need to be cleaned once a year or more depending on use.
4. Clean out your wood stove thoroughly before lighting your fire.

CHECK COTTAGE BUILDING(S) FOR DAMAGE OR CHANGES:

1. Assess shingles for damage or leaking. Routine maintenance and quick repair of any damage will help prolong shingle life.
2. Assess and repair any flashing that has been damaged (including chimney flashing).
3. Assess soffit, fascia and siding for any damage and areas where rodents have gained access or may gain access to the buildings.
4. Ensure all gutters, downspouts and leader extensions are in place. Make sure that connections are secure and free of debris.
5. Assess windows, doors and screens for any damage.
6. All structural components (foundation, posts, beams, joists or floor slab) should be checked for any new damage or to ensure any existing issues have not worsened (cracks, moisture damage, wood rot etc.).
7. Check all caulking and weather stripping for damage and replace as needed.



TIP: During spring run off and storms assess the foundation of the cottage to see if and where water is pooling. Water will damage the foundation and lead to water intrusion into the home. Diverting as much roof and ground drainage from the building will help protect the building and anything housed in a crawl space or basement area (wood structure, insulation, water heater, furnace, etc.).

LOOK AROUND THE INSIDE OF YOUR COTTAGE:

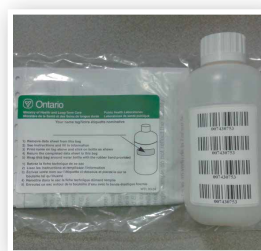
1. Check the interior of the cottage for damage or evidence of rodent intrusion. Block any rodent entry points.
2. Assessing the attic on a routine basis is suggested to ensure there is

no rodent entry, no water intrusion or moisture build up. Moisture build up will cause damage to the structural components of the attic as well as the insulation. If moisture build up is observed, the ventilation will need to be assessed and improved. Early detection and correction can help prevent an expensive repair.

3. Ensure you have adequate working smoke and CO2 detectors.
4. Check the expiry date of your fire extinguisher(s). Ensure they are charged, and if outdated, have them serviced by a licensed technician.
5. Empty and dispose of any mousetraps and poison that was set out in the fall.

WATER SYSTEM & LINES:

1. Inspect all water lines for obvious damage.
2. Connect all water pipes. Prime the pump and start it.
3. Ensure that all anti freeze is washed out of the lines; flush all toilets, run an empty washing machine, and if you have an automatic ice maker discard the first few loads of ice.
4. Drain any residual water and anti freeze from the hot water tank and refill prior to turning the hot water tank on.
5. Inspect the water filtration system. Clean all parts of the UV light. Change filters. If pollen is bad in the spring you may want to use a clean, older filter until the pollen is gone so you do not waste a new one. Do any other needed or routine maintenance.
6. Once the water system is up and running, check the entire water line system for any leaking. Watch for the pump running on a constant basis or being hot to touch.
7. When the lake water is warmer pull up your foot valve and assess. Repair and do maintenance work as required.



DRINKING WATER:

Well water should be tested regularly. If your drinking water comes from a well have the water tested prior to drinking to ensure it is safe to drink. Some wells, especially dug wells can be affected by spring run off water. Testing kits can be obtained at the local Health Unit. For more details visit www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Water-testing.aspx.

SEPTIC TANKS:

Have the septic tank(s) or holding tank pumped if needed. It is always a good idea to expose both tank lids (hard waste and grey water), and have both sides pumped. The baffles can be assessed and repaired at this time. This is also a good time to inspect for items that should not be in your tank (i.e. tampons, paper towels, diapers, wet wipes). If these items are found, it is likely a good time to review what can and cannot go in the septic system

with everyone who uses the cottage. If you are not familiar with septic systems plan on doing some research to learn how these systems operate and how to maintain a healthy system. This will help to prolong the septic system life and help to prevent costly repairs.



DECKS AND PORCHES:

Check decking, steps and railings for damage before being used for the season (especially if elevated). Snow load and ice can damage decking, stairs or porches to the point where they are dangerous to use. Snow and ice can slide off a

roof with enough force to pull decking loose from the building or cause the deck to collapse, so ensure that decks are well secured.

Taking the time to check your cottage and property will bring you peace of mind to fully enjoy the 2016 cottage season!

If you have any questions about spring cottage inspections, visit www.clearviewhome.ca or contact them directly by phone or email.

Roly Wight, Certified Home Inspector
Clearview Home Inspection • 705-790-4999
info@clearviewhome.ca • www.clearviewhome.ca

Clearview Home Inspection

- Certified Home Inspector
- Certified WETT Inspector
- Septic inspections
- Light commercial inspections
- Infrared imaging
- EMF equipment used
- Gas detection equipment used
- Palm-Tech reporting software
- Fully insured with HUB International

"Inspected Once, Inspected Right"
4 Bayview Trail, McDougall ON P2A 2W9
705-790-4999
www.clearviewhome.ca / info@clearviewhome.ca