HOUSEFIXLIBRARY

Your first 30 days

Start with safety, then records and a manageable routine.

First 48 hours

- [ ] Locate safe exits; agree a meeting place; test smoke and CO alarms.
- [ ] Find the household water shutoff and panel from safe access. Ask the utility about gas emergencies.
- [ ] Record utility and landlord contacts privately. Report immediate hazards.

Days 3-7

- [ ] Collect equipment manuals and model numbers. Record correct filter sizes.
- [ ] Review the home inspection report and unresolved issues.
- [ ] Observe visible leaks and outdoor drainage safely.

Days 8-14

- [ ] Prioritize immediate danger, professional assessment and routine care.
- [ ] Arrange overdue service. Record alarm replacement dates.
- [ ] Buy tools for planned jobs, not speculative repairs.

Days 15-30

- [ ] Choose a monthly check day and download the calendar on the site.
- [ ] File receipts and warranties; obtain written quotes for unresolved work.
- [ ] Review completed tasks and assign the next seasonal checks.

Need the interactive version? Visit HouseFixLibrary.com/new-homeowner-checklist/

Monthly + annual checks

Month: _____ Year: _____

Every month

- ☐ Test smoke and CO alarms using their manuals.
- ☐ Inspect the HVAC filter; clean or replace as directed by condition and model.
- ☐ Look for accessible plumbing and appliance leaks.
- ☐ Keep exits clear; note fresh moisture, movement or trip hazards.
- ☐ Test garage-door safety and electrical protective devices as the makers direct.

Annual service review

- ☐ Arrange professional inspection of fuel-burning heating equipment and venting.
- ☐ Arrange full dryer-exhaust cleaning; heavy use or symptoms may mean sooner.
- ☐ Review tank flushing / tankless descaling requirements for your exact heater.
- ☐ Review pump and backup tests, battery condition and alarm end-of-life dates.
- ☐ Check gutters in spring/fall and after storms; arrange safe cleaning as needed.

Intervals are prompts, not a universal instruction to service every component yourself. Never ignore a new warning sign because the next calendar date is months away.

Service record

Date / item / result / next action:

A plan for every season

Adjust to climate, storms, equipment and actual condition.

Spring

- [ ] Book cooling service; inspect drainage after rain.
- [ ] Inspect gutters and screens from safe access.
- [ ] Review sump and backup tests before wet weather.

Summer

- [ ] Look for leaks; keep specified airflow clear.
- [ ] Watch humidity and recurring condensation.
- [ ] Inspect walking surfaces and deck guards; stop use if unstable.

Fall

- [ ] Arrange heating and venting inspection.
- [ ] Check gutters after leaf fall; arrange safe cleaning.
- [ ] Disconnect hoses; follow faucet instructions and book irrigation winterization.

Winter

- [ ] Watch condensation, dampness and frozen-pipe symptoms.
- [ ] Keep exits and emergency information accessible.
- [ ] Keep generators and grills outside, well away from openings.

Download 12 monthly calendar reminders at HouseFixLibrary.com/maintenance/

Your emergency reference

Prepare during normal conditions. Keep this record private.

Immediate danger: leave first

Gas odor, smoke, a CO alarm, active arcing or possible collapse: leave the danger area and call 911 from safety. Do not stay to investigate or reach a shutoff.

Water

Use only the identified household valve from a safe, dry route. A known quarter-turn water ball valve normally closes across the pipe; a wheel valve normally turns clockwise. Never force a stuck valve or operate a utility street valve without instructions.

Gas

Ask your utility to identify the shutoff before an incident. If gas is suspected, leave without operating switches or using a phone in the affected area. Only operate a valve when specifically directed and safe. Never restore shut-off gas yourself.

Electricity

Keep the screwed panel cover fitted. Wet, hot, buzzing or damaged equipment means keep clear. A main switch OFF does not make every panel part safe; solar and backup supplies may remain. Repeated breaker trips need an electrician.

Water valve location: _____

Gas utility emergency number: _____

Landlord / building manager: _____

Electrician / plumber: _____

Safe meeting place: _____

Primary references: PHMSA pipeline-leak guidance; DC Water emergency preparation; ESFI fuse and breaker guidance; USFA smoke-alarm and dryer guidance; CPSC CO questions. Linked source pages accompany the full guides on the website.