

Home Systems Care Chart

System	Breakdown Probability	What to Check	Maintenance	Time of Year	Approx. Cost
Electrical	Med. to high for old wiring, until new appliances overload system.	Before buying a house older than 25 years, have wiring checked. Watch for sluggish switches and worn receptacles.	Raise amperage of service Entry if plagued with overloads. Update switches, install dimmers to save energy.	Fall in the north., Spring in the south.	Low to med. for raising amp. or extending circuits. Med. to high for replacing wiring. Low to replace switch or receptacle
Plumbing	Hard water – no softener, med to high for metal piping. Med. for system at least 20 yrs. old. High if untended piping isn't winterized.	A gradual decline in water pressure. Wet pipe joints; leaks. Faucets for dripping, drains for clogging, toilets for inadequate flushing. Pipe "hammer".	Replace lime-clogged piping; consider installing softener. Replace leaking pipes. New washer or cartridge for leaking faucet; snake out clogged drain; possible new float, stopper for toilet. Air chamber for 'hammer'. Insulate cold-prone pipes.	Fall, before winter makes some repairs more difficult.	Medium to high to replace house piping. Low for fixing faucets, drains, toilets, insulating pipe. Low/med. for 'hammer'.
Cooling					
Central AC	Low-Med for system older than 10 years. Med. for uneven delivery of cool air for unintended. system	Filter for dirt; motor and blower for smooth operation. Uneven delivery of cool air. Dirt, leaves caught in outdoor coils. Pay for annual service call.	Change filter as needed. Hose debris from the outdoor condenser coils. Balance uneven delivery of cool air by adjusting registers.	A service call may be cheaper, faster in winter.	Very low for changing filters. Only your time for cleaning coil, balancing system. Med/low for service calls.
Heat Pump	Low for breakdown. Med. to high for inoperative heating cycle in temps. consistently below -15F	Same as for central air-conditioning.	Change filter as needed. Hose debris from outdoor condenser coil. May have to switch damper positions for heating, cooling modes. Switch on emergency heat when outdoor coil ices over and call for service.	Spring and fall because system runs all year. Get off-season service calls.	Very low for changing filters. Your time for cleaning coil, rebalancing system for new seasons. Med/low for service calls.

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Heating					
Forced Air	Low for breakdowns, but as years pass, system efficiency declines. High for poor delivery of heat if system is never checked	Filter for dirt; motor and blower for smooth delivery; balanced heat delivery/ Invest in biennial service check.	Change filter as needed. You may need to oil motor according to manufacturer's instructions. Balance uneven delivery by adjusting registers. Adjust blower belt.	Prior to cold weather. May be cheaper to get service in summer.	Very low for new filters, oil for motor. Only your time to balance system. Med/low for service calls.
Hot Water	Low for breakdowns, med. for air-locked lines if equip. is 10 yrs. or older. Low-Med. for older expansion tanks.	Even delivery of heat. Boiler water for rust, scale. Air blocks in nonfunctioning radiator/convectors. Invest in annual service check.	Drain water boiler if rusty. Balance system at zone valves. Bleed air radiator/convectors/ Check out and repair leaks.	Spring. Boilers are most prone to rusting in summer, when they aren't used.	Only your time to flush boiler, balance system or bleed lines. Low to replace single section of pipe.
Steam	Low/Med. because most systems are in older houses and aging.	Even delivery of heat. Boiler water for rust, scale. Water blocking in dead-level return line. Get annual service check.	Make sure air vents are working, lines not tilted toward boiler. Flush rusty boiler water. Repair leaks.	Same as for hot water.	Only your time to purge air and lines and flush boiler. Low to replace single pipe section.

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