

The Cheap Chore Calendar

the small jobs that stop the expensive phone call

EVERY MONTH

- Run a clean-washer cycle. Wipe the door gasket dry afterward and leave the door open between loads.
- Look at the furnace filter. Replace it when light stops passing through it, not because a calendar said so.
- Pull the fridge out and vacuum the coils. Free, and it is the difference between a fridge that runs and a fridge that runs constantly.
- Boiling water down the kitchen drain. Also free.

EVERY THREE MONTHS

- Snake the bathroom drains before they slow down. Waiting until the water stands is waiting too long.
- Run the dishwasher empty and hot, and pull the filter out of the bottom. Most people do not know it comes out.
- Wash the shower curtain liner. It goes in the machine with towels.
- Flashlight under every sink, looking for a dried ring or a soft spot in the cabinet floor.

TWICE A YEAR

- Clean the dryer duct, not just the lint trap. These are two different jobs and only one of them is the one people do.
- Test the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and change the batteries.
- Flush the water heater if your water is hard. In western New York it is hard.
- Reverse the ceiling fans when the heat goes on.

ONCE A YEAR

- Furnace serviced before you need the heat. Nobody gets a good appointment in January.
- Reseal the grout in whichever shower gets used most.
- Check the washer hoses for bulges or soft spots. Rubber ones fail eventually; braided steel ones mostly do not.

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what not to do yourself, what to watch for when you buy

THE THREE PEOPLE SKIP AND REGRET

- A zippered mattress protector. A mattress is the most expensive soft thing in the house and one bad night ends it.
- A squeegee kept in the shower. Hard water etches glass, and etched glass does not come back - no product undoes it.
- The bathroom fan. If it will not hold a square of toilet paper against the grille, it is not moving air, and that is where ceiling mold comes from.

CALL SOMEONE - THIS IS NOT A DIY LIST

- Any smell of gas. Leave the house first and call from outside.
- Standing water in a basement anywhere near the electrical panel.
- A sewage smell that does not clear. That is a vent or a dry trap, not something a cleaner fixes.
- A furnace that starts short-cycling right after a filter change.
- Anything electrical beyond resetting a breaker once.

BUYING NOTES - THE TRAPS THAT WASTE YOUR MONEY

- Furnace filters are one listing per size. Read the numbers printed on the cardboard frame of the one you are pulling out, and buy that.
- Higher MERV is not automatically better. A very dense filter can starve an older blower. Check what the furnace manual allows.
- Mattress protectors are one listing per size as well. Twin, full, queen and king are separate pages, not a dropdown.
- Gloves almost always default to Small in the size selector. Change it before you check out.
- A garbage disposal tablet is a deodorizer. It is not a clog remover and it will not fix a slow drain.

TWO SAFETY RULES, AND THESE ARE THE REAL ONES

- Never mix an acidic cleaner with bleach. Acidic toilet bowl cleaner plus any bleach product makes chlorine gas. This is the one that actually sends people to the hospital.
- Never run a machine cleaner and bleach in the same cycle for the same reason. One or the other, and rinse between.

Lia - bossmomblog.com - i own a cleaning company and two small humans.