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Comprehensive Home Care Maintenance Guide

1. How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed as a comprehensive reference to help you better understand and care for your home's exterior over time. It provides additional context behind common maintenance recommendations, explains why certain practices matter, and highlights issues we regularly observe in the field.

Some sections of this guide relate directly to the services completed at your property, while others are included as value-added education to help you make informed decisions about ongoing exterior care. Not every section will apply to every home, but each is intended to support long-term durability, appearance, and performance.

This guide is meant to be used as a **reference**, not a checklist. You may choose to read it in full or refer to specific sections as questions arise. Your technician may also reference certain sections when making observations or recommendations specific to your property.

If anything in this guide raises questions or concerns, we encourage you to reach out. Our goal is not only to provide services, but to help you understand how to protect your home between visits.





2. Universal Home Care Fundamentals

The following fundamentals apply to nearly every home, regardless of age, construction type, or location. These principles form the basis of proper exterior care and are the most common factors we see influencing long-term performance, appearance, and avoidable damage.

2.1. Water Management

Managing water around your home is one of the most important aspects of exterior maintenance. When water is not directed away effectively, it can contribute to foundation movement, moisture intrusion, organic growth, and premature wear of exterior materials.

- ✓ Ensuring downspouts discharge **6–10 feet away from the foundation** helps prevent soil saturation near the home. Water released too close to the structure can collect at the foundation and increase pressure against below-grade areas.
- ✓ Soil grading around the home should be monitored to prevent water pooling. Over time, soil can settle, mulch can build up, or landscaping changes can unintentionally redirect water back toward the structure.
- ✓ Overflow or splash-back should be addressed early. Repeated water contact with siding, trim, or foundation surfaces can lead to staining, accelerated material breakdown, and conditions that attract pests or organic growth.

2.2. Building Envelope Awareness

The building envelope refers to the exterior surfaces and transition points that protect your home from weather, moisture, and air intrusion, including siding, windows, doors, seals, and penetration.





- ✓ The building envelope includes all exterior surfaces and transition points that separate the interior of the home from the elements. These areas are designed to shed water, but they rely on seals, caulking, and proper detailing to function correctly.
- ✓ Regularly inspecting seals, caulking, and penetrations (such as around windows, doors, vents, and utility entries) helps identify deterioration before water intrusion occurs. Sealants naturally age and can crack or shrink over time.
- ✓ Staining on siding, trim, or around openings may indicate moisture intrusion or repeated water exposure. While not all staining is immediately concerning, it is often an early visual cue that warrants attention.

2.3. Vegetation & Airflow 🌿

- ✓ Proper airflow and sunlight play a key role in keeping exterior surfaces dry and free from excessive organic growth. Areas that remain shaded or damp for extended periods are more prone to moss, algae, and mildew development.
- ✓ Vegetation should be trimmed away from siding and rooflines to reduce moisture retention, prevent physical contact with surfaces, and maintain clear visibility for inspection and maintenance.
- ✓ Improving airflow and sunlight where possible helps exterior materials dry more quickly after rain or irrigation. This not only improves appearance but also supports the long-term durability of finishes and building components.





3. Common Exterior Do's & Don'ts (Critical)

The following do's and don'ts are some of the most common factors we see contributing to avoidable exterior issues. While many of these may seem minor on their own, repeated exposure over time can lead to staining, moisture intrusion, material degradation, and increased maintenance needs.

3.1. Do

- ✓ Keep water directed away from the structure
- ✓ Water should always be managed with the goal of moving it away from the home. Proper drainage helps protect foundations, siding, and lower wall assemblies from prolonged moisture exposure, which is one of the leading contributors to exterior wear and hidden damage.
- ✓ Maintain proper soil and mulch clearance below siding
- ✓ Visible clearance between soil or mulch and siding allows materials to dry properly, reduces the risk of moisture wicking, and helps limit pest access. Over time, landscaping changes can unintentionally eliminate this clearance, making periodic review important.
- ✓ Address small issues before they escalate
- ✓ Minor concerns such as loose seals, isolated staining, or early organic growth are often easier and less costly to address when caught early. Left unattended, small issues can gradually develop into larger maintenance or repair concerns.





3.2. Do Not

- ✘ Aim irrigation or sprinklers at windows, siding, or glass railings
- ✘ Repeated overspray introduces unnecessary moisture, minerals, and chemicals to exterior surfaces. This can lead to staining, seal deterioration, spotting on glass, and conditions that encourage organic growth.
- ✘ Place BBQs or smokers near windows, deck glass, railings, or siding
- ✘ Heat, grease, smoke residue, and airborne oils from BBQs and smokers can permanently stain siding, glass, and nearby surfaces. These residues are difficult to remove and often require additional cleaning or restoration.
- ✘ Store items directly against siding or exterior walls
- ✘ Items placed against the home restrict airflow, trap moisture, and make it difficult to visually monitor the condition of exterior materials. Stored items can also create shelter for pests and accelerate surface wear.
- ✘ Use consumer pressure washers on siding, window seals, soffits, or roofs
- ✘ High-pressure water applied to these areas can force moisture behind surfaces, damage seals, and compromise building materials. Even when damage is not immediately visible, water intrusion may occur beneath the surface.
- ✘ Allow constant shade and damp conditions to persist
- ✘ Areas that remain shaded and wet for extended periods are more prone to moss, algae, mildew, and surface deterioration. Where possible, improving airflow and sunlight exposure helps materials dry more efficiently and remain in better condition over time.





4. Service After-Care & Ongoing Monitoring

After-care is not about constant intervention, but about awareness. Following professional exterior services, most surfaces are best left to dry naturally and perform as intended. Monitoring conditions over time — rather than immediately taking action — often provides the clearest insight into how your home responds to weather, drainage, and environmental exposure.

Many of the recommendations in this guide apply both to prevention and after-care. Observing how surfaces behave after rainfall, cleaning, seasonal changes, or temperature shifts can help identify early patterns before they develop into larger concerns.

We also stand behind the quality of our work. If something related to your recent service doesn't look right or raises questions, we encourage you to contact us within the applicable service guarantee period so it can be reviewed promptly. Early communication allows us to address concerns efficiently and ensure expectations are met.

If you're ever unsure whether what you're seeing is normal or worth addressing, reaching out early allows for informed guidance and avoids unnecessary action.





5. Window Care

☒ Proper window after-care help preserve clarity, prevent premature seal failure, and avoid avoidable spotting or staining. While windows are designed to withstand the elements, improper rinsing methods or contact with harsh materials can shorten their lifespan over time.

5.1 What to Avoid 🚫

💡 **Do not rinse windows with tap water unless using a properly filtered system capable of reducing total dissolved solids (TDS) to below 5 ppm**

Most municipal tap water contains high levels of dissolved minerals and chemicals, commonly exceeding 100 ppm. When this water dries on glass, it can leave mineral spotting, streaking, or residue that becomes increasingly difficult to remove over time. Only properly filtered water at very low TDS levels is suitable for rinsing windows without risk.

💡 **Avoid abrasive tools, rough cloths, or harsh chemicals**

Abrasive materials can scratch glass, damage coatings, and wear down seals or frames. Harsh or inappropriate chemicals may leave residues or react with window materials, leading to dullness or discoloration.

5.2 Best Practices ✅

💧 **Allow rain to naturally rinse loose dust when possible**

Light rainfall can help remove surface dust without introducing minerals or chemicals. This is often preferable to manual rinsing when no proper filtration system is available.





i Address visible debris gently with professional-grade methods if needed

If debris such as sap, bird droppings, or buildup is present, it should be addressed carefully using appropriate tools and techniques. Improper removal methods can cause scratching or damage, even when debris appears minor.

i Monitor window tracks and frames for standing water

Water trapped in tracks or frames can contribute to seal deterioration and moisture intrusion over time. Ensuring these areas drain properly helps protect both the window assembly and surrounding materials.

5.3 Watch For ⚠️

i Fogging between panes:

Fogging or condensation between glass panes often indicates a failed seal. Once seals deteriorate, insulating performance and clarity are compromised, and the issue cannot be corrected through cleaning alone.

i Moisture intrusion or deteriorating seals:

Discoloration, swelling, or persistent moisture around window frames may signal seal or flashing issues. Early detection allows for timely evaluation before more extensive damage occurs.





6. Gutter & Downspout Maintenance

✂️ Gutters and downspouts play a critical role in managing roof runoff and directing water safely away from the home. When they are obstructed, damaged, or improperly draining, water can overflow onto siding, collect near the foundation, or contribute to staining, erosion, and moisture-related issues.

6.1 Visually inspect gutters after heavy rainfall 🧐

Rain events provide a clear opportunity to observe how gutters are performing. Water should flow smoothly toward downspouts without spilling over edges. Overflow during rainfall often indicates blockages, improper slope, or capacity issues that may not be obvious during dry conditions.

6.2 Ensure downspouts remain secured and unobstructed 🔍

Loose, disconnected, or clogged downspouts can redirect large volumes of water back toward the structure. Downspouts should remain firmly attached and free of debris, so water is carried away efficiently and predictably.

6.3 Watch for overflow, sagging, or erosion near discharge points 🔍

Overflowing gutters or sagging sections can signal excess weight from debris or standing water. At ground level, erosion or washed-out soil near discharge points may indicate that water is not being dispersed properly and could impact grading or foundation areas over time.





6.4 Keep roof valleys clear of debris


Roof valleys are designed to channel large volumes of water toward gutters. When debris accumulates in these areas, water flow can be restricted, increasing the likelihood of overflow, premature wear, or moisture intrusion along roof edges.







7. Pressure Washing & Exterior Surface Care

7.1 Surface Protection

 Organic growth holds moisture against surfaces and accelerates wear. Algae, moss, and mildew retain moisture and limit a surface's ability to dry properly. Over time, this prolonged dampness can contribute to staining, surface degradation, and shortened material lifespan, particularly on shaded or north-facing areas.

 Pressure washing can etch surfaces or force water behind materials. Many exterior materials are not designed to withstand high-pressure water. Pressure applied to siding, trim, seals, or seams can drive water behind the surface, where it may become trapped. This can lead to hidden moisture damage, swelling, staining, or deterioration that may not appear until much later.

 Soft washing uses low-pressure application methods to safely treat organic growth while minimizing stress on sensitive exterior surfaces. When performed correctly, this approach allows for effective cleaning without forcing water behind materials or damaging finishes, making it suitable for many siding and exterior surfaces that should never be pressure washed.

7.2 Homeowner Guidance


Periodic light rinsing of hardscape may be acceptable

Durable, non-porous hardscape surfaces such as concrete or pavers may tolerate light rinsing when appropriate. These surfaces are designed to shed water and dry quickly,






making them less susceptible to moisture retention when compared to vertical building materials.

 **Avoid** pressure washing siding, soft stone, wood, or sealed surfaces

Materials such as siding, wood, soft stone, and sealed finishes are especially vulnerable to damage from pressure. Pressure can remove protective coatings, damage finishes, or allow water intrusion beneath the surface.

 **Monitor shaded areas for regrowth**

Shaded or damp areas tend to experience faster organic regrowth. Observing these areas over time allows for early intervention before buildup becomes extensive or begins to impact surface integrity.





8. Roof Washing & Moss Prevention

Roofs are designed to shed water efficiently, but their performance can be significantly impacted by organic growth, debris buildup, and repeated moisture exposure. Proactive awareness and prevention help extend roof lifespan and reduce the likelihood of premature wear or damage.

Moss and organic growth trap moisture and shorten roof lifespan

Moss, algae, and other organic growths retain moisture against roofing materials, preventing proper drying. Over time, this persistent dampness can accelerate material breakdown, compromise protective granules, and increase the risk of leaks or deterioration.

Keep roof valleys and transitions clear

Roof valleys and transition points are designed to handle concentrated water flow. When debris accumulates in these areas, water movement can be restricted, increasing the likelihood of pooling, overflow, or premature wear along seams and edges.

Trim overhanging branches to increase sunlight and airflow

Overhanging branches contribute shade and debris buildup, creating conditions that support moss and organic growth. In addition, overhanging branches can act as access points for pests such as squirrels, mice, rats, and raccoons, allowing them to reach the roof and locate entry points into the home. Once on the roof, pests may access vents, gaps, or transitions where they can nest or cause damage inside the structure.





9. Pest Prevention & Exterior IPM Awareness

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) focuses on identifying and reducing the exterior conditions that allow pests to thrive, rather than relying solely on reactive treatments. In most cases, pest activity is closely tied to moisture, shelter, warmth, and access points around the home.

Most pest issues originate from exterior conditions

The majority of pest problems begin outside the home, long before activity is noticed indoors. Conditions such as moisture buildup, debris, warmth, and unsealed openings near the structure create ideal environments for pests to establish themselves and eventually seek entry inside.

Seal gaps larger than approximately 6 mm

Openings around siding, vents, utility penetrations, foundations, and service lines can provide easy access for insects and rodents. Gaps larger than roughly 6 mm are sufficient for many common pests to enter and should be addressed where possible.

Store firewood at least 10 feet away from the structure

Firewood, lumber, and stacked materials provide shelter and nesting opportunities for insects and rodents. When stored close to the home, these materials increase the likelihood of pests migrating toward the structure.

Reduce moisture-heavy environments near foundations

Moisture is one of the strongest attractants for pests. Poor drainage, irrigation overspray, dense vegetation, or shaded areas near the foundation can create conditions that support pest activity. Reducing excess moisture helps make areas around the home less inviting.





Hot tubs and spas require special attention

Hot tubs and spas can attract pests such as mice and rats due to the warmth they generate, particularly in cooler months. Ensure skirting and access panels are in good condition and free of gaps. Any openings should be properly sealed using durable materials such as metal mesh combined with appropriate sealants. This is also a good opportunity to confirm that insulation within the hot tub enclosure is intact, as missing or damaged insulation can contribute to heat loss, frozen plumbing, and increased operating costs.

Minimize sheltered voids and undisturbed spaces near the structure

Areas beneath decks, stairs, hot tubs, and additions can provide protected environments for pests if left unsealed or unmanaged. Periodic inspection of these areas helps reduce the likelihood of nesting or long-term pest activity.





10. Snow Removal

Snow and ice accumulation can place significant stress on exterior surfaces, drainage systems, and access points around the home. Proper awareness during winter months helps reduce the risk of water intrusion, material damage, and safety concerns as conditions change.

Snow accumulation can restrict drainage and airflow

Snow buildup around foundations, downspouts, and exterior walls can prevent proper drainage during melt cycles. When snow blocks discharge points or traps moisture against the structure, meltwater may refreeze or migrate toward areas not designed to handle prolonged moisture exposure.

Ice buildup can stress materials and surfaces


Repeated freeze–thaw cycles can cause expansion and contraction in exterior materials. Ice buildup on walkways, steps, roof edges, and transitions may accelerate wear, contribute to cracking, or compromise seals over time.

Downspouts, drains, and vents should remain visible and clear

Snow or ice covering downspouts, drainage points, and exterior vents can interfere with proper function. Blocked vents may impact airflow, while obstructed drainage can lead to water backup and localized ice formation.





 **Roof edges and overhangs should be monitored during heavy snowfall**

Snow accumulation along roof edges and overhangs can contribute to ice buildup and uneven melt patterns. Observing these areas during extended snowfall or warming periods helps identify potential concerns early.

 **Post-winter melt should be monitored closely**

As temperatures rise, melting snow can reveal drainage issues, staining, erosion, or moisture patterns that were hidden during winter. Early observation during thaw periods allows concerns to be addressed before spring rains arrive.





11. When to Call a Professional

While many exterior conditions can be monitored over time, certain signs may indicate underlying issues that benefit from professional evaluation. Early consultation can often prevent minor concerns from developing into more extensive or costly problems.

Persistent water staining

Ongoing staining on siding, foundations, or near openings may indicate repeated moisture exposure or drainage issues. While some staining is cosmetic, persistent patterns often suggest water is not being managed as intended.

Recurring pest activity

Repeated sightings of insects, rodents, or nesting activity can signal exterior conditions that are supporting pests, such as moisture, shelter, warmth, or access points. Addressing these contributing factors early helps reduce the likelihood of interior intrusion.

Rapid organic regrowth

When moss, algae, or mildew returns quickly after cleaning, it may indicate persistent moisture, shade, or airflow limitations. Frequent regrowth is often a sign that underlying conditions need to be evaluated rather than repeatedly treated.

Visible structural changes

Such as shifting materials, separation at seams, sagging components, or unusual wear patterns should be assessed promptly. Even subtle movement or distortion can indicate moisture-related stress or drainage concerns.





 **Any exterior condition you are unsure about**

If something doesn't look right or raises questions, it's worth asking. Exterior systems are interconnected, and early clarification can help avoid unnecessary damage or maintenance down the line.





12. Frequently Asked Questions

1. How often should exterior services be completed? 📅

Most exterior services are recommended on an annual or seasonal basis, depending on environmental exposure, surrounding vegetation, moisture levels, and the specific materials on your property. Homes in shaded or moisture-prone areas may benefit from more frequent maintenance to prevent buildup from becoming established.

2. Will buildup return after cleaning? 🔍

Yes. Organic growth and environmental buildup naturally return over time. Regular maintenance helps control how quickly and severely this occurs, reducing long-term wear and making future services more effective and less invasive.

3. Is staining always a sign of damage? 👁️

Not always. Some staining is cosmetic and related to environmental exposure. However, recurring or expanding staining patterns may indicate moisture retention, drainage concerns, or other underlying issues that are worth monitoring or evaluating.

4. When should I contact Havyn? 📞

If you notice persistent water staining, recurring pest activity, rapid organic regrowth, visible changes to exterior materials, or anything that raises questions, it's best to reach out early. We're always happy to provide guidance and help determine next steps.

