



STAND IN THE GAP FOR WIDOWS

HOME MAINTENANCE 101

*****A special thank you to architect Bruce Bockus (Bockus Payne Associates Architects, Oklahoma City, OK) for writing and donating Home Maintenance 101 to Stand in the Gap for Widows.***

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INTRODUCTION: You Can Do It!

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing... Psalm 68:5-6

The Church is called to stand in the gap for widows. One of the ways we accomplish this is in your hands. The Home Maintenance 101 Manual was designed to assist widows and single mothers who are responsible for the care and maintenance of their home through both do-it-yourself instructions, and a directory of reliable home maintenance professionals sourced through their home church.

Every homeowner needs a list of reliable contractors to keep the home running well. Costly repairs can often be prevented by simply keeping up with standard maintenance.

Contractors listed in this Directory have been recommended by church members because of their fair pricing and quality work. Contractors are not asked to provide their services free of charge, rather they are asked to provide service at a fair price with care, courtesy, and honesty. Contractors found to break this commitment will be removed from the Directory.

In order to maintain the highest possible level of service, it is important for members who receive services from a Directory professional to fill out the evaluation form in this packet. Please return evaluation forms to your widow ministry leadership.

Additional areas of service may include:

- Financial Counseling
- Taxes and Accounting
- Insurance Counseling
- Computer Literacy/Maintenance
- Car Maintenance

Church members who can offer support in these areas are encouraged to notify the widow ministry leadership.

PART ONE - The Exterior

The exterior of your home is the first line of defense against anything you do not want in your home; water, cold air, termites, etc. Every year, walk around your home to assess the exterior condition. Before calling an expert to help with a problem, consider looking at www.helpfixing.com or exploring YouTube.com for video instructions on a variety of home repairs.

Exterior Condition Annual Check List

Foundation

Look for excessive cracking in exterior walls. Some hairline cracking is common, but if cracks are wider than 1/4 inch, they may indicate movement in your home's foundation. In Oklahoma, foundation movement is common and is generally caused by heaving rather than settling of the soil. Generally, problems are aesthetic and not structurally serious. If any crack is wider than 1/4 inch, however, contact a foundation repair company for an inspection.

Roof

No need to climb up on the roof! The first sign of a roof problem is generally a water stain on the ceiling or cracking paint under the eave of the roof. If multiple missing shingles, visibly brittle or chipping shingles are visible from the ground, these may also be signs that your roof needs repair or replacement. Most roofs, except wood shingles and flat roofs, have a 25-to-40-year warranty.

If you experience a hailstorm, contact a roofer to assess the roof for a possible insurance claim. If/When a roof replacement is needed, consider one that your insurance company defines as "hail resistant." This type of roof may make up for the higher initial cost by lowering your insurance premium.

Brick, Stone, Paint, and Siding

a. Brick and Stone: The brick or stone on your home is most likely a veneer. As such, it is not structural. It is common to find hairline cracks in the mortar joints between the bricks or stones. Your brick or stone should last the life of your home with little or no maintenance. If cracks wider than hairline occur, they may be the result of foundation movement (refer to foundation above).

b. Paint: Peeling or cracking paint will allow moisture to damage the wood behind the paint. Therefore, it is important to maintain exterior paint. Generally, houses require fresh exterior paint every 7-12 years.

c. Siding: Wood siding needs to be protected by paint or stain. If damaged or deteriorated siding must be replaced, consider a composite siding, which does not split or warp. Composite siding may also come pre-finished in a limited number of colors.

Windows and Doors

Airtight windows and doors are important to the energy efficiency of your home. Windows placed in homes in the last 30-40 years typically have two panes of glass and are called "thermal pane" windows.

When the seal between the two panes of glass loosens, it may allow fog into the space between the panes. This cannot be repaired. The issue is primarily cosmetic and whether or not it is worth the cost of replacement is up to you. PSO will recommend a contractor to provide a "whole house assessment."

This can help boost energy efficiency, improve comfort, cut costs, and enhance indoor air quality. Visit your electric company's website for more information or to search for approved contractors. (In Oklahoma, go to www.psoksaves.com/homeperformance for more information or to find a PSO approved contractor.)

Sprinkler Systems

Check your sprinkler system annually. Typically, exposed sprinkler system parts are made of plastic. A broken sprinkler head or pipe can waste water and kill grass and plants.

Pest control

Termite damage can be silent and devastating. Look for swarming termites following a spring rain. It is wise to have a pest control professional inspect your home annually.

PART TWO - The Interior

Heat and air conditioning

Your heat and air conditioning system is likely either a “split system” or a “heat pump.” Having your system (no matter which type) serviced in the spring and fall of each year is recommended.

A “split system” is made up of four parts:

1. The **air handler and furnace** (located in a closet) is typically where the air filters are located. Air filters need cleaning or replacing every couple of months (more often if pets are present). In Oklahoma, most split system furnaces are powered by natural gas.
2. The **condensing unit** (located outside) uses Freon to produce the cold that makes the air conditioning unit work. There is a Freon line connected to the air handling unit. If your air conditioning unit quits cooling, it is often either a Freon leak or the Freon unit. Try raising the temperature on the thermostat, this will allow the frozen unit to thaw. After two or three hours, slowly lower the temperature. If the unit is still not cooling, call a repair person.
3. The **ductwork system** is comprised of air ducts that supply air to your home. When the supply vents in your home are dusty, this signifies the need to clean the filter on your air handling unit. There are also return air vents inside your home. Clean or replace the filters located on those vents every couple of months (monthly if pets are present).
4. Your **thermostat** may be manual or have features that automatically change the temperature for day and night cycles.

If your home is heated and cooled with a geothermal, or ground source heat pump, you do not have the exterior condensing unit, only an interior, all electric heat pump. An air source heat pump will have an exterior heat pump unit and an interior air handler.

Plumbing

The water heater is likely the only plumbing fixture that requires some maintenance. Water heaters can be either gas or electric. It is possible for a water heater to “rust out” and create a huge water mess. A water heater’s performance will diminish over time, indicating it is time to be replaced. Most manufacturers recommend that water heaters be flushed on an annual basis. Ask your plumber to service your water heater when you’ve made a service call to him or her for some other issue.

We do not recommend calling a plumber for every dripping faucet. Wait until you have two dripping fixtures because plumbers have a minimum charge!

Electrical

Your electrical system is controlled by either a breaker panel or a fuse box (in older homes). If an appliance fails to work, check the outlet first. Make sure you haven’t overloaded the circuit by using multiple appliances or electrical devices on a circuit not designed to handle them. This occurs by using too many extension cords for too many devices. Try plugging in a different device to ensure that the problem does not lie with the particular device.

Once you’ve ruled out these options:

- If you have a fuse box, you must replace the fuse. Fuses are available at home improvement stores and can easily be replaced without calling an electrician. If replacing the fuse does not solve the issue, call an electrician.
- If you have a breaker panel, check for a flipped breaker switch in your breaker panel. A flipped breaker is visible and must be reset by pushing the breaker switch totally off and then flipping it to the on position. You will hear a click. If the breaker trips again, call an electrician.

Security/Fire Safety

Working smoke detectors are legally required in all homes. Carbon monoxide detectors are also wise

to install. Most detectors are battery operated. Plan on replacing the batteries annually. Most detectors will beep when the batteries are low. If your detectors have a test button, use it to ensure the detector is working.

Appliances

Most of our appliances are electric (with the exception of gas ranges or ovens). In general, appliances are not do-it-yourself repair projects. If you believe the appliance is worth repairing instead of replacing, contact the manufacturers service department or the service department in the store where you purchased the appliance.

Computers and Smart Phones

Besides being there in person, there is no better way to stay in touch with family and friends than with a computer or smart phone. It is easy to connect by video through applications like Skype or FaceTime. It is also simple to transfer and backup pictures, videos, and information at the push of a button.

PART THREE - Church Home Maintenance Directory*

The Widow Ministry is responsible for populating these fields. Although the ministry recommends each of the following professionals, Stand in the Gap and the Widow Ministry are not responsible for the work of Directory professionals.

Architects/Home designers

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

General contractors

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Lawn and Garden

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Plumbers

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Heat and air conditioning

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Electricians

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Painters

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Roofers

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Handymen

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Framers/Trim carpenters

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Appliance Repair

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Pest control

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

**You are encouraged to consider other service providers and to check all references, licenses, and insurance, before you engage anyone on this list or anyone else. The Church does not guarantee the quality, workmanship, or integrity, of the listed service providers.*

PART FOUR - Evaluation Form

Name of contracting company: _____

Name of Person Performing the Work: _____

Contractor's Phone number: _____

Description of Job: _____

Evaluation of Work

Far Exceeded Expectations

Better Than Average

Satisfied

Slightly Dissatisfied

Totally Dissatisfied

Please rate 1-5 (one being the best)

Promptness

Cleanliness

Quality

Price

Courtesy

Responsiveness

Would you recommend this contractor to others? Yes or No

Comments:

Your name, phone number, or email address (optional).

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

****Please return this form to the Widow Ministry Leadership***