

Opening the cabin - exterior checklist

- Look for any signs of break-ins, vandalism, or damage from harsh weather or falling trees.
- Check your roof for damage, especially around the chimney and flashings.
- If you installed a cap or other protective covering on the chimney in the fall, don't forget to remove it!
- Check your windows, screens, and doors. If you installed covers over your windows, remove them.
- Check your porch or deck for loose or sprung boards.
- Check the pier for possible ice damage or shifting.
- Check the building's foundation for new cracks, water damage, water seepage.
- Check the siding or chinking for ice damage or any new cracks that have occurred during the winter.
- If your water is pumped to your cabin, check the condition of the surface pump and confirm its adequate operation by checking the pressure gage on the main water tank.
- Tour your outbuildings and grounds and note any damage or required maintenance. For example, are there any tree limbs that are broken that pose a threat from falling?
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How about your septic system?

Regular maintenance prolongs the life of your system. A failing septic system can cause a serious health threat for your family and neighbors, contaminate the environment, reduce the value of your property, and be very expensive to repair.

- Your septic system should be inspected by a licensed septic contractor every two to three years and pumped out every one, two or three years (depending on the size of your holding tank and the amount of use).
- Keep a record of pumping, inspections, and other maintenance. Learn the location of your septic system and drain field. Keep a sketch of the area handy for service visits.
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Opening the cabin - interior checklist

- Check for signs of water leakage around the windows, doorways, or the floor and from the ceiling.
- After pressurizing your water system, check water pipes carefully for any signs of leakage. Note that hairline cracks in water pipes may not be evident until the system has been on for some time.
- Are there signs of any rot or mold?
- Inspect electrical wiring to ensure everything is in order; check the condition of open wiring that rodents may have chewed on. Damaged wiring is a fire hazard. Replace or repair... don't put it off!
- Propane? Inspect the condition of the tank and connections.
- For propane or gas - test all fittings and hoses with soapy water: if you see bubbles forming, that means there's a leak. Call in a certified professional to solve the problem.
- Are household appliances in good condition?

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All systems go?

- Turn on the main circuit breaker, making sure all auxiliary breakers are turned off. Then, systematically turn individual breakers on, one at a time, to be sure they are in working order.
- Turn the water on. Let the water run through the pipes for a few minutes and flush toilets; this is especially important if you poured anti-freeze down the pipes. Check pipes for leaks and hairline cracks.
- Before turning your gas or propane back on, open all the windows to make sure the cabin is well ventilated. Open the valves on each appliance first, then open the main line. Light all pilot lights. By the way, spring is the ideal time to perform the annual cleaning of the burners.
- Turn on or light pilot (if gas) for hot water heater. **Important:** Ensure the water heater has filled with water before turning it on.
- Arrange for your phone to be reconnected if you have seasonal service.
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Spring cleaning

- Open your windows and doors to air out the stuffy winter cabin in preparation for summer use.
- Clean up rodent or bird droppings and remains. Get rid of mothballs, insect, rodent, and vermin poison and any traps that may endanger children or pets' safety. Wear rubber gloves - if you have mouse droppings wear a surgical or dust filter mask to reduce the risk of possible exposure to hantavirus.
- Eliminate cobwebs.
- Dust, vacuum rugs, and sweep floors.
- Clean kitchen and bathroom surfaces.
- Check all drawers for evidence of mice and if necessary, clean thoroughly.
- Wipe out the fridge before turning it on. Hopefully you left it propped open during the winter.
- Outside, clean any debris out of gutters and rain spouts, sweep your deck or patios, and wipe off any outdoor furniture.

Final tips

- Have your well water analyzed in a certified laboratory at least once a year.
- Check all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, making sure to replace the batteries.
- Verify that the fire extinguisher is properly charged.
