

The Los Angeles Homeowner's Seasonal Checklist

Twenty things worth looking at over the year, in the order you'd actually walk the house. Most take a few minutes and cost nothing. The point is to find the small problems before the weather does.



Fall, before the rain

Late October to mid November

7 CHECKS

- ☐ **01 Gutters**
Scoop out the leaves and needles, then run a hose at the far end and watch the water reach the downspout. Press on the fascia, the board the gutter is nailed to. Soft or stained wood means it's been spilling over for a while.
[Guide: constructionhub.la/help/spot-clogged-gutters](https://constructionhub.la/help/spot-clogged-gutters)
- ☐ **02 Downspouts and drains**
Water should land 4 to 6 feet from the house, not at the corner. Pull the grate on each yard drain, clear the mud and pour in a bucket of water to be sure it drains.
- ☐ **03 Roof edges, from the ground**
Look for lifted shingles, cracked tiles and gaps where the roof meets a wall, a chimney, a vent or a skylight. A flat roof over a carport or an addition holds water longer than the main roof, so give it a second look.
- ☐ **04 Fence and deck**
Push each fence post. If it moves, the wood below the soil line is going. Walk the deck and feel for spongy boards near the steps and under planters.
- ☐ **05 Outdoor outlets**
On each GFCI outlet (the one with two buttons), press Test, then Reset. Check that the weather cover still closes.
- ☐ **06 Doors and windows**
Close each outside door on a sheet of paper. If it slides out easily, the weatherstripping is worn. Look at the caulk around the outside of the window frames for cracks.
- ☐ **07 Ceilings and the main shut-off**
Photograph any stain on a ceiling now, so you can compare after a storm. Find the main water shut-off, make sure it turns, and show everyone in the house where it is.



Early winter, before guests

Late November to mid December

5 CHECKS

- ☐ **08 Front door**
It should latch on the first push, and the deadbolt should turn without lifting the door. If you have to lift, the top hinge screws have usually worked loose.
- ☐ **09 Walls**
The dent from moving furniture, the holes where a picture used to hang. Small holes are spackle, a sanding sponge and a little paint.
[Guide: constructionhub.la/help/fix-drywall-hole](https://constructionhub.la/help/fix-drywall-hole)
- ☐ **10 Kitchen**
Install whatever is still in its box, and put the drawer that came off its rails back on.
- ☐ **11 Guest bathroom**
Listen to the toilet for a minute after it fills. A hiss, or a refill when nobody flushed, is usually the flapper. A black line along the tub caulk is mold behind it, and it won't scrub out.
- ☐ **12 Alarms and the dryer vent**
Press the test button on every smoke and carbon monoxide alarm and check the date on the back. Clean the lint out of the dryer vent hose, not just the screen. A full house runs the dryer all day.



After the first storms

January

4 CHECKS

- ☐ **13 Outside, the day after a rain**
Look for standing water along the foundation and for gutters that have pulled away from the fascia. Put back any downspout extension the storm knocked loose.
- ☐ **14 Holiday lights**
Take them down and box them. Clips left up through the winter get brittle, and the wire rubs on the roof edge.
- ☐ **15 Doors that stick now**
A door that closed fine in October and sticks in January has usually swelled. Wait for a dry week before planing it, because the wood shrinks back.
[Guide: constructionhub.la/help/fix-sticking-door](https://www.constructionhub.la/help/fix-sticking-door)
- ☐ **16 Ceilings, sinks and the water heater**
Hold a flashlight flat against the ceiling, not pointed straight up. A stain shows up sideways long before you can see it face on. Compare with your fall photos. Then open the cabinet under every sink and look at the base of the water heater. A damp cabinet floor is a slow leak.



Late winter, before sprinkler season

Late February to March

4 CHECKS

- ☐ **17 Sprinkler controller**
Replace the backup battery if it has one, check the clock, and set the spring schedule.
- ☐ **18 Every zone, by hand**
Run each one and walk along with it. Look for heads spraying the wall, the sidewalk or nothing, and for a bubbling puddle, which usually means a broken line. A zone that runs by hand but not on the schedule is usually the valve or its wire.
- ☐ **19 Where the water lands**
Sprinklers that soak the bottom of a stucco wall every morning keep it wet all summer, and that's where paint bubbles and wood rots. Turn the heads away.
- ☐ **20 What the rain left behind**
Push the fence posts again, since soaked soil lets a weak one lean. Check the gate that started dragging, and note any branches that grew out over the roof this winter.

Notes

Found something bigger?

If something here turns out to be more than an afternoon, have someone come look, and walk them through the whole list while they're there.

Santa Monica and all of LA

(424) 645-8655
constructionhub.la