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Exterior Structural Items – You Can Do It Series

Michigan State University Extension Service

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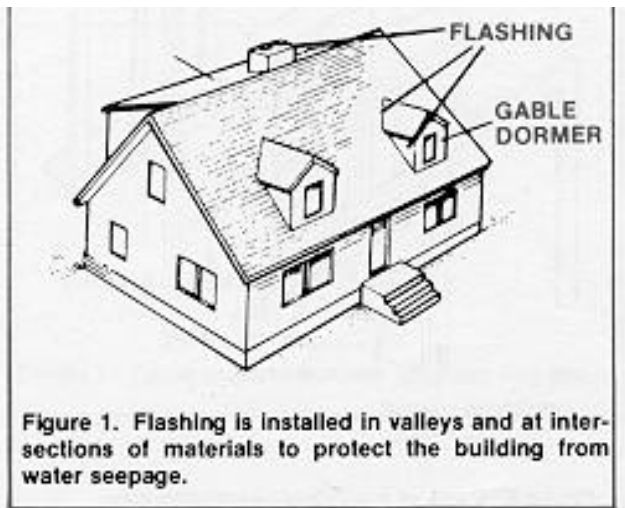
Exterior Structural Items

Roof

9 Inspect for wind, snow, or ice damage. Check to see that roof shingles are secure, tightly fastened, and in good condition (fall and spring). If loose, repair with asphalt roofing cement if damaged or missing, replacement will be necessary and may require professional help. For those who cannot climb, binoculars are helpful for the inspection.

9 Inspect flashing around chimney, in valleys where roof sections meet, and at intersections between a roof and vertical projections, such as plumbing or fan vents, dormers, and attached walls (annually; see Figure 1). Reflash if flashing has deteriorated; if flashing is in good condition, seal leaks with a good grade of caulk, such as butyl or aluminized caulk, or with asphalt roofing cement. (Note: Caulk is easier to use and causes less discoloration.)

9 Check supports, seals around supports, and guy wire anchors of roof mounted equipment, such as television antennae, to insure that they are securely fastened (annually). If loose, tighten. If the seal is damaged, repair with caulk or asphalt roofing cement.

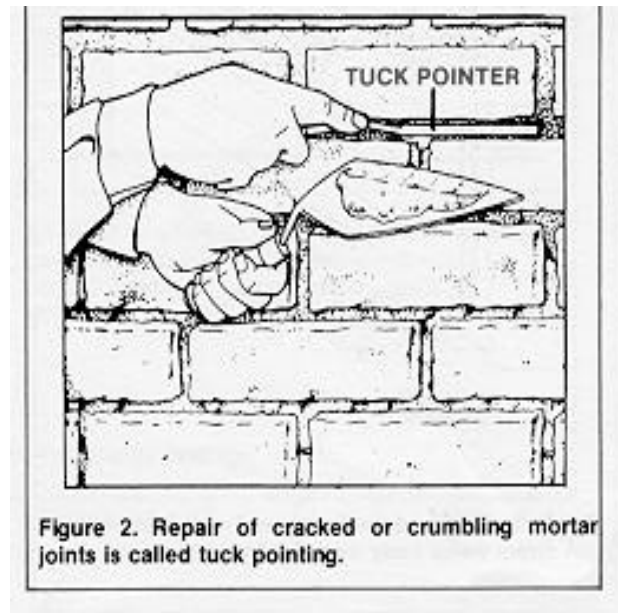


9 Inspect masonry chimneys for cracks and mortar missing around bricks or blocks (spring). Any patching (called tuck pointing) should be done using a dry mortar, i.e., a stiff but workable paste, or masonry cement compound. A professional is often required for this job (see Figure 2).

Gutters and Downspouts

9 Check to see that gutters and downspouts are securely anchored to the eave line and house wall (spring and fall; see Figure 3). If loose, tighten and add additional gutter supports.

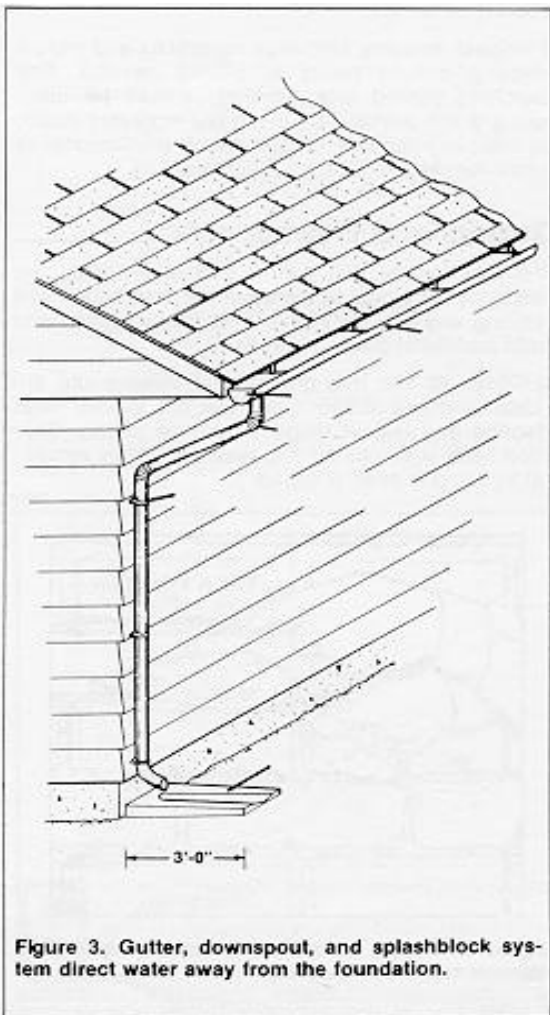
9 Check to see that gutters and downspouts are clean and free of debris, such as dirt, leaves, twigs (spring and fall). If clogged, remove debris. Garden hose is helpful for this task, but debris removal by hand is often required.



9 Check to see if gutters and downspouts need spot or complete repainting (spring). If gutters are galvanized iron or steel, remove rust with a wire brush, emery cloth, and steel wool. Clean with naphtha or other degreasing cleanser and recover with paints and primers designed for these surfaces.

9 Inspect for holes or leaks in gutter troughs or at gutter seams (spring). If leaks are minor, seal with roofing cement or a good grade of caulk or sealant; otherwise, replace the damaged section.

9 Check to see that splashblocks are in good repair, that they direct water at least 3 feet away from the foundation. Splash blocks should slope at least 1 inch per foot of block run (spring and fall). If broken or cracked, replace.



Siding

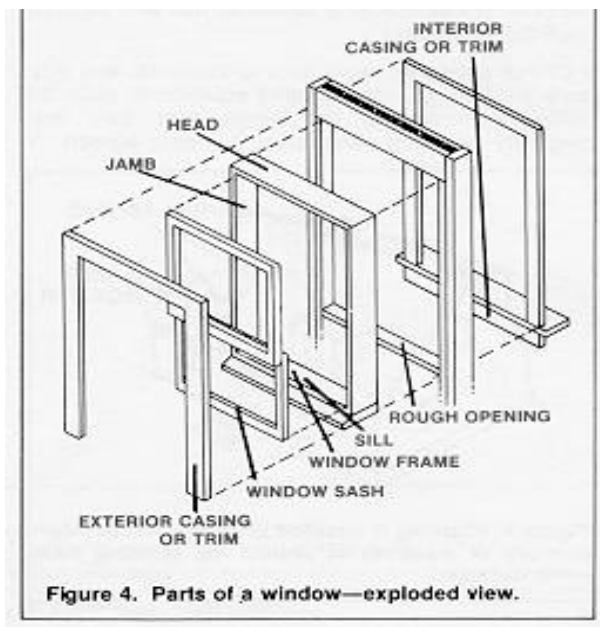
9 Inspect wood, asphalt, and asbestos cement siding for damage, such as nail pop, cracking, splitting, warping, or decay (spring). If warped, realign boards with screws. If split or damaged, replace worn section. If nails have pulled loose, reset existing nails and add additional nails to secure.

9 Inspect the house exterior to see that paint is in good condition, free of mildew, cracks, peeling (spring and fall). If mildew is present, wash the surface with an alkaline cleaning solution such as chlorine bleach. If paint is defective, remove old paint, apply a priming coat, and repaint. If paint has failed within two years of application, contact a professional to determine the cause. Remedy the problem before repainting.

9 Inspect masonry or brick walls for loose, crumbling mortar joints (annually). Repair mortar immediately to prevent water from seeping through and damaging the wall by freezing (see roofing section for details.)

Windows and Doors

9 Check exterior wood doors, garage doors, and window and door frames (interior and exterior) to see that paint or varnish is in good condition (spring, see Figure 4). If paint is chipped or cracked, remove defective paint apply a priming coat and repaint. If framing members are cracked or rotting, determine the cause and remedy; then replace and repaint damaged areas.



9 Inspect doors and windows for tight fit, easy movement, condition of glass and glazing (spring and fall). Replace cracked or worn glazing or broken glass. (Note: Damaged glass should be replaced with tempered glass because ordinary glass shatters when broken).

9 Check weatherstripping around windows and doors to see that it is firmly attached and fits snugly when windows/ doors are closed (fall; see Figure 5). If damaged or loose, replace or repair.

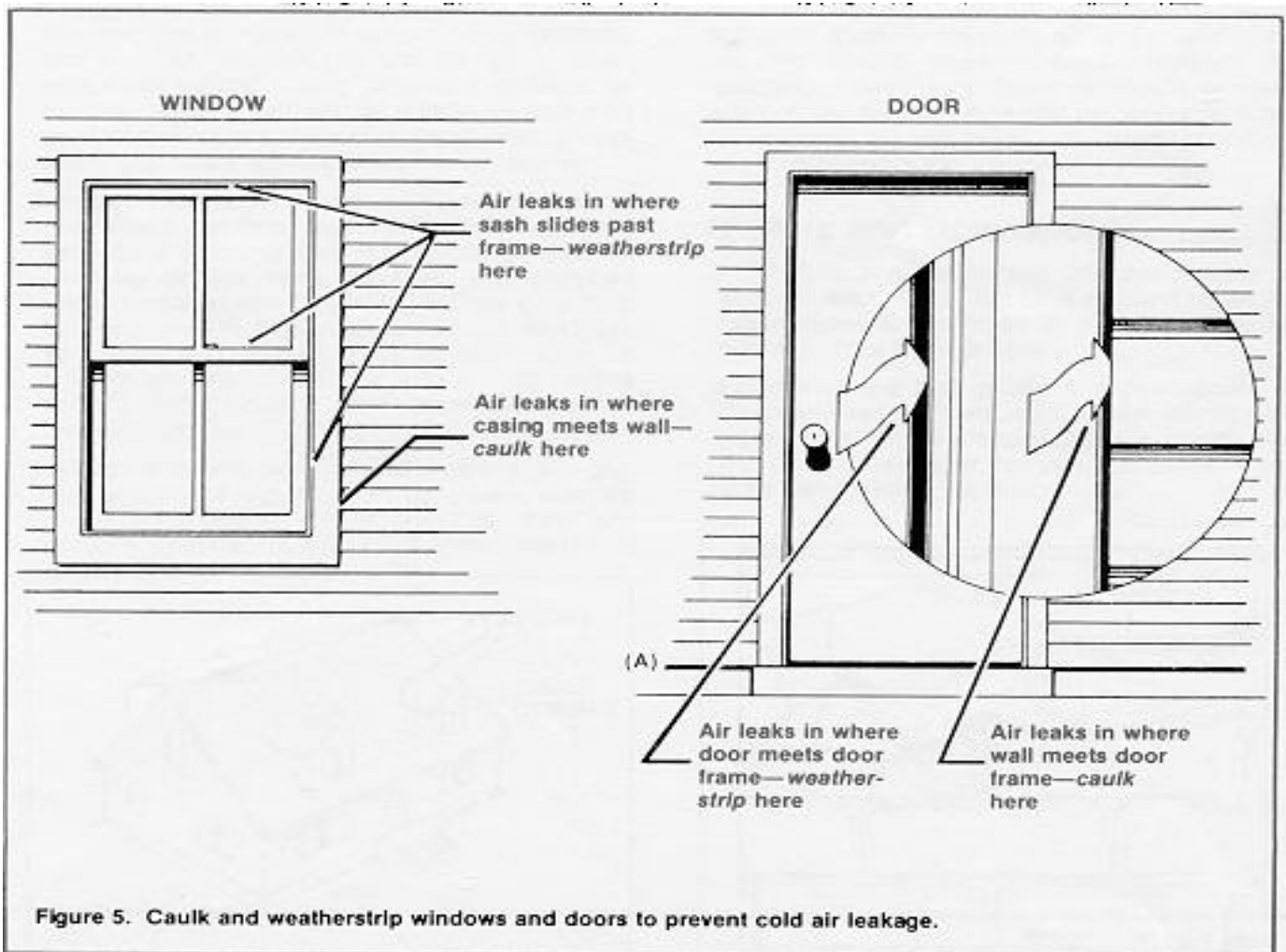
9 Check caulking around exterior window and door frames to see that it is in good condition (fall see Figure 5). Recaulk if caulk has pulled away from either side of the joint.

9 Inspect and clean storm windows and doors; see that glass and glazing are in good condition and that the door swings freely and fits snugly in place when closed (fall).

9 Inspect and clean window and door screens with a stiff bristled brush, detergent, and water, or spray aluminum screening with aluminum cleaner and lubricant (spring). Repair or replace torn screening.

9 During winter months periodically check inside surface of windows for condensation. To control, lower relative humidity levels in the home and add storm windows, if they are not already present. Over time, watch window sills for signs of decay.

Checklist prepared by Susan Mireley, Extension Housing Specialist, Dept. of Human Environment and Design, Michigan State University, and Don D. Jones, Extension Agricultural Engineer, Dept. of Agricultural Engineering, Purdue University.



Other Publications in the "You Can Do It, Too" Home
Maintenance Checklist Series:

- E-2090 Structural Components of a Home
- E-2092 Interior Structural Items and Outside
Areas
- E-2093 Space Conditioning Systems
- E-2094 Plumbing Systems

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