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## Water, Water Everywhere

Nothing says summer quite like torrential downpours. And while the rain usually provides much-needed relief from the heat, it also can wreak havoc on your home's structure.

Detecting leaks early is key, and it can make all the difference between cleanup that requires a simple mop and bucket and having to undergo major construction. Most water problems stem from three areas around your home: leaky roofs, poor drainage around the foundation and clogged gutters or downspouts.

First, it's important to routinely check your roof for leaks. Missing, curling, broken or cracked shingles can be a warning sign that the roof might need to be repaired. Also take note of any damage or deterioration around chimneys, vents or dips in the roof. Keep your roof free of debris, such as leaves and sticks, and trim trees regularly to prevent them from rubbing against shingles.

Where and how your home is positioned on the property can also affect how well water drains (or doesn't) from the foundation. Pooling of water around the house can indicate low-lying areas and insufficient drainage. Fill in any of these spots so water flows away from the house and extend downspouts several feet from the foundation to whisk away even more water.

Finally, inspect gutters and downspouts regularly for any debris. Installing gutter shields can help prevent clogs from building up inside the pipe. And if you are frequently away from home, consider installing a water alarm. If the system detects a leak inside the house, such as toilets, faucets or the water meter, it will automatically shut off the water supply to prevent further damage.

Home water leaks only worsen with time, so be sure to conduct routine checks — and if a problem occurs, address it sooner rather than later.

Sources: State Farm Insurance Co.



## Break the Mold

Summer's here. The temperature is climbing, and so is the humidity. And when humidity levels exceed 70 percent, it can create prime conditions for mold growth in your home.



Outdoors, molds are an important part of the ecosystem, breaking down dead leaves, trees and branches. But indoors, it has no rightful place. Indoor molds, often called black mold, can cause health problems, such as asthma and allergic reactions, and can irritate the eyes, nose, throat and lungs.

In some cases, mold is simple to spot — along windowsills, in the shower or on damp wood. Finding it throughout the rest of your home, however, is not always as easy. It can be hidden behind walls that might have suffered previous water damage, under old flooring or carpets, or within the HVAC system. If you walk into a room that smells especially musty, you're probably smelling mold.

Determining who should do the cleanup depends on the extent of the mold. If the moldy area is smaller than 3 feet by 3 feet, you can usually handle the job yourself. However, if it's larger than 3 feet by 3 feet, if there's a lot of water damage or if you suspect it's in the HVAC system, hire a contractor who has experience in cleaning mold.

Take precautions if you do the cleanup yourself. Avoid breathing in mold or mold spores. Many hardware stores carry N-95 respirator masks, which catch most mold spores before they enter your breathing space. Wear long gloves that extend to the middle of the forearm to avoid touching the mold with your bare hands and use protective goggles with ventilation holes.

To prevent mold buildup in the future, fix plumbing leaks and other water problems as soon as you notice them, and be sure to dry everything completely.

Source: Environmental Protection Agency

## fast fact >> >> >> >> >> >> >> >>

To remove mildew or algae from a wooden deck, use a 50/50 mixture of bleach and water. Any store-brand bleach will work. Rinse the solution off with a garden hose. For brick, use a power washer.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



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# The Right Moves

You found the perfect house, signed on the dotted line and are daydreaming about life in your new home. As moving day looms, it's also time to think about packing up your many belongings. Have you found enough boxes? How to handle those precious family heirlooms and other breakables? Here are a few tips for making your big day go as smoothly as possible:

## Before You Start

- Prioritize your packing list. Consider what you don't need to take with you, what will need extra packing care and how to best organize your things.
- Estimate how many boxes you'll need and get them well in advance of moving day. Save newspapers to line boxes.
- Consider investing in moving insurance, which will cover any



damages or breakages during the move.

## Getting Under Way

- Start early. Packing always takes longer than you think.
- Begin at the top of the house first and work your way down. Attics are a great place to start sorting.
- Move from room to room, packing and labeling carefully as you go. Clearly mark boxes that contain breakable

objects. Be sure to keep all boxes that belong to a certain room together. It will make it much easier when you unpack.

- Newspaper can sometimes leave marks, so wrap your valuables in bubble wrap, blankets or pillows to avoid messy newsprint.
- Keep all of your important documents, such as birth and marriage certificates, in the same place for easy reference.

## Thinking Ahead

- You likely won't want to shuffle through boxes on your first night in your new home, or you might be traveling long distance and have your household items show up after you've arrived. Either way, pack an essentials box containing a change of clothes and toiletries, as well as coffee, tea, snacks, cups, plates and utensils. A small tool kit, first-aid supplies and pen and paper are also important to have on hand.

Source: BBC Homes

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## DID YOU KNOW



Running a sprinkler for two hours can use up to 500 gallons of water. To figure out the right amount to water, put an empty tuna can on your lawn. When it's full, you've watered about the right amount.

Source: [www.eartheasy.com](http://www.eartheasy.com)



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