

Protect Your Investment

Schedule Preventative Maintenance for Your Wooden Decks and Fences

Did you know that dirt, grime and algae build-up accelerates the rate of wood decay? Combine that with all the elements Mother Nature sends our way annually: snow, rain, ice, sun, humidity and insects. Now add a scooping heap of extreme cold aka a Polar Vortex, record breaking snowfalls and 100 degree days. All of that combined can take a toll on our homes exteriors.

Does your deck or fence look gray and dreary? Are they tired looking and sagging? Could they use some serious first aid or even a facelift? What can we do to reverse these aging effects and preserve our wooden structures like the deck and the fence? Read on for some tips on basic routine preventative maintenance (don't forget to always follow the instructions on any cleaning and staining products).



Longtime resident and Community Standards Committee Volunteer, Pat Hess, recently gave us a glowing review of the product called **WET & FORGET**. "It works, you really do Wet & Forget. Just spray it on and watch it work. Our fence looks so good now!"

CLEAN

- ◆ Use soap and water or purchase a heavy duty cleanser.
- ◆ Use a power washer (be careful not to overdo and damage the wood).
- ◆ For serious stains consider a wood brightener (oxalic acid).
- ◆ Use a putty knife to clear out debris between boards. If left this debris can absorb water and promote wood rot.
- ◆ When cleaning wood railings – work from the bottom up to prevent splashes of cleaning solution on the dry wood below (this will reduce marks and over bleaching).
- ◆ Keep nearby trees and bushes pruned away from the wood to help slow the growth of moss and mold which contributes to wood rot.
- ◆ Allow the wood ample time to dry before applying sealant.

REPAIR

- ◆ Give everything a good shake...Are the deck railings loose? Does the fence wiggle?
- ◆ Hammer protruding nails back into place or substitute screws.
- ◆ Secure any loose boards with screws.
- ◆ Fill in cracks with water resistant wood glue.
- ◆ Tighten the supports on the fence gates to prevent sagging.
- ◆ Look for signs of wood rot and insect damage (on decks pay special attention

to the joists, posts, beams, underside of stair treads and the ledger where the deck attaches to the home).

SEAL

- ◆ Determine if you need a sealant by sprinkling a few drops of water on the wood. If the water doesn't bead up and instead soaks right in, the wood should be sealed.
- ◆ It is a good idea to do a light sanding to get rid of the "fuzzies" before you begin the process.
- ◆ Look for a product that offers protection against the sun's UV rays and also one that deters the growth of algae and mildew.
- ◆ Clear sealer lets the wood's natural grain and color show through while at the same time repelling water. Plan to reapply annually for best results.
- ◆ Semi-transparent and transparent stains tint the wood a color. But how do you know which to use? Semi-transparent stain may be a better choice to hide discolorations and imperfections on an older fence that has a weathered appearance. Reapply stain finishes as needed (every other year is a good routine) using the same or a slightly darker color. (Please keep in mind if you are considering changing the color of your structure, you will be required to submit an Exterior Modification Application for approval prior to any changes).

