

The Bellwether HOME Check

10 Easy Things to Check Inside Your Home

You do not need to be a home inspector to keep an eye on your house.

These are simple checks you can do yourself to catch small issues before they become expensive ones.

1. Test Your Smoke + CO Detectors

Why it matters

These devices only help if they actually work.

What to do

Press and hold the test button on each smoke and carbon monoxide detector.

You should hear a loud alarm.

Check for

- No sound
- Weak or chirping sound
- Missing batteries
- Units that are more than 10 years old

Bellwether recommendation

Test them monthly and replace batteries as needed.

If the unit is old, damaged or will not test properly, replace it.

2. Clean Your Dryer Vent

And no, I do not just mean the lint screen.

Why it matters

Lint buildup can restrict airflow, make your dryer work harder and increase fire risk.

What to do

Clean the lint screen after every load.

Then check the vent hose behind the dryer and the exterior termination.

Check for

- Heavy lint buildup
- Crushed or kinked vent hose
- Loose connections
- Clothes taking longer than normal to dry
- Exterior vent flap that does not open properly

Bellwether recommendation

Have the full dryer vent line cleaned about once a year, especially if the run is long or has several turns.

3. Look Under Your Sinks

Why it matters

Tiny leaks can stay tiny-looking for a long time while doing very expensive things.

What to do

Open the cabinet under each sink and use a flashlight.

Touch around the supply lines, shutoff valves and drain connections.

Check for

- Dampness
- Water stains
- Swollen cabinet material
- Rust or corrosion
- Musty smells
- Active dripping

Bellwether recommendation

If you find moisture, dry the area and figure out where it is coming from.

Do not just put a towel down and call it handled.

4. Change Your HVAC Filter

Why it matters

Your HVAC system is already working hard.

Do not make it breathe through a sweater.

What to do

Locate your air filter and check its condition.

If it looks gray, dusty or packed with debris, replace it.

Bellwether recommendation

Check it monthly.

Many homes need replacement every 1 to 3 months depending on the filter, pets, allergies and how often the system runs.

Always follow your system or filter manufacturer's recommendations.

5. Check the Caulk Around Your Tub + Shower

Why it matters

Water notices every little opening.

What to do

Look along the edges of the tub, shower walls, fixtures and where different materials meet.

Check for

- Cracked caulk
- Peeling caulk
- Gaps
- Missing sections
- Dark staining

Bellwether recommendation

Remove deteriorated caulk and reseal the area before water gets behind the wall or flooring.

6. Give Your Toilets a Little Wiggle

Yes, really.

Why it matters

What to do

With your hands, gently try to move the toilet from side to side.

It should feel secure.

Check for

- Rocking or movement
- Water around the base
- Soft flooring nearby
- A loose toilet seat or tank

Bellwether recommendation

A rocking toilet can damage the seal underneath and eventually lead to leakage.

If the toilet moves, have it corrected.

7. Test Your GFCI Outlets

Why it matters

These are the outlets with the little TEST and RESET buttons.

You will commonly find them in kitchens, bathrooms, garages, basements and exterior areas.

What to do

1. Press TEST.

Power to the outlet should shut off.

1. Then press RESET.

Power should return.

Bellwether recommendation

If the outlet will not test or reset properly, have a qualified electrician evaluate it.

8. Check Your Washing Machine Hoses

Why it matters

This one takes about 30 seconds.

What to do

Look behind the washing machine at the hot and cold water supply hoses.

Check for

- Bulging
- Cracking
- Rust
- Corrosion
- Moisture around the connections

Bellwether recommendation

If the hoses look damaged or questionable, replace them before they decide to make that decision for you.

9. Take a Look at Your Water Heater

Why it matters

You do not need to take anything apart.

What to do

Just look.

Check for

- Water underneath the unit
- Rust
- Corrosion
- Staining
- Dripping around pipes or valves
- Unusual noises

Bellwether recommendation

If you see active leaking, significant corrosion or anything that suddenly looks different, call a qualified plumbing professional.

10. Check Your Bathroom Exhaust Fan

Why it matters

That fan is doing more than making noise.

It helps remove moisture.

What to do

Turn the fan on while showering.

After the shower, let it continue running for about 15 to 20 minutes.

Check for

- Fan does not operate
- Very weak airflow
- Excessive noise
- Bathroom stays foggy for a long time
- Peeling paint or recurring moisture staining

Bellwether recommendation

Clean dust from the fan cover periodically and make sure the fan is actually moving air.

Your House Is Always Giving You Information

You do not need to know everything about your home.

You just need to notice when something changes.

A new stain.

A new smell.

A new sound.

A little movement that was not there before.

Those are the moments worth paying attention to.

Protect your power. Know your home.

Bellwether Home Inspection

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