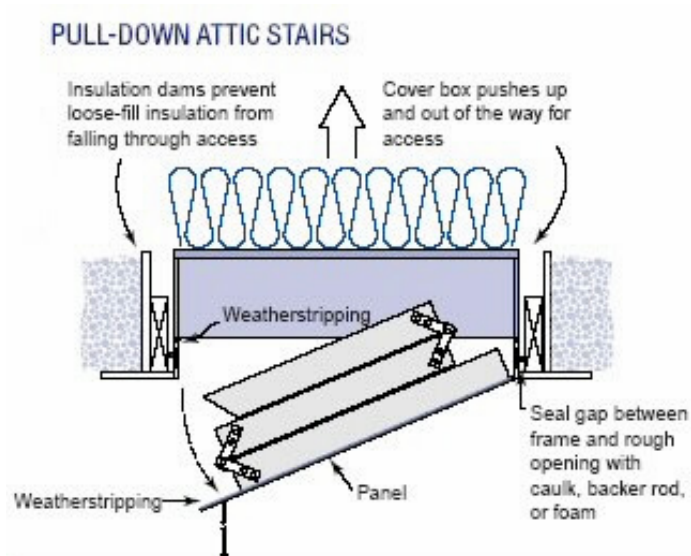


# Home Safety and Maintenance

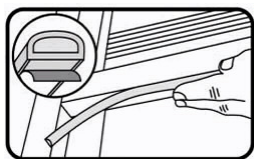
Recommendations to keep your home safe and in good condition.

## Attic Pull-Down Stairs

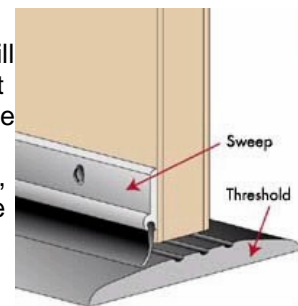


We recommend adding weatherstripping around the attic pull-down stairs. Unconditioned attic air can enter the conditioned space which will increase your utility bills. Every little bit helps. Also, attic stairs that are not insulated are the largest source of heat loss and heat gain through the attic. The plywood panel is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. We recommend installing an insulated cover with R-30 fiberglass insulation over the stairs. Insulated covers can be purchased from Battic Door at (508) 320-9082, [www.batticdoor.com](http://www.batticdoor.com) or Amazon at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). If you are handy, you can make one from foam sheathing purchased from Lowes or Home Depot.

## Door Weather-Stripping

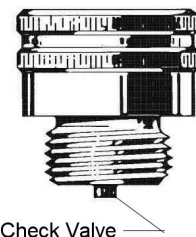


Add door weather-stripping and a door sweep to the interior door to an unheated basement. You will be surprised how much conditioned air can be lost around the basement door. Purchase self adhesive weather-stripping that can be applied to the door stop of the frame. Also, by installing a door sweep, air cannot move underneath the door. A sweep is better than a bulb type threshold, because most basement doors are located at the top of stairs and the bulb could be a trip hazard. Both will prevent losing heating and cooling around the door frame.



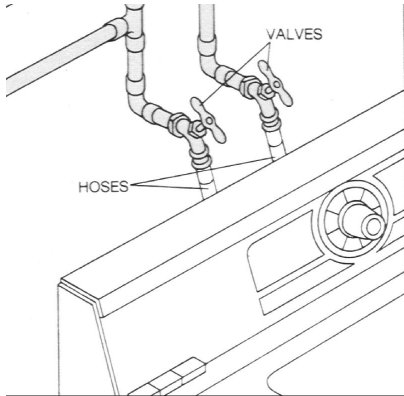
## Draining Hose Bibbs (Water Faucets)

We recommend draining all exterior hose bibbs (water faucets) in the winter to prevent the pipes from freezing and breaking. Caution: The brass backflow preventers, that are screwed onto the ends of the hose bibbs, must be removed or press the check valve in order to drain the water out of the piping.



Check Valve

## Replace Washing Machine Water Hoses



We recommend replacing washing machine water hoses every five years. The rubber hoses that connect the washing machine to the water supply can break and flood your home. Purchase the ones with metal braided covers for additional support. Also, turn off the water supplies when going on a vacation or out of town.

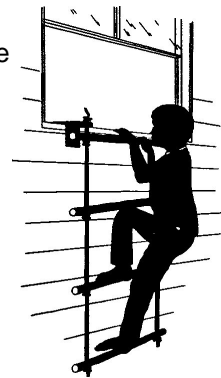
## Smoke Detector Batteries



Test all smoke detectors and replace the batteries once a year. Some smoke detectors are wired to an electrical circuit, but all have batteries in case the power goes out during a storm. We recommend replacing smoke detectors every ten years. Older units will wear out and fail to work in case of an emergency. If you have gas heat, replace them with combination smoke & carbon monoxide detectors.

## Purchase a Rope or Chain Ladder

We recommend purchasing a chain or rope ladder that can be used for an emergency exit through one of the upstairs bedroom windows just in case a fire downstairs blocks the bottom of the stairs. Keep it stored in one of the upstairs bedroom closets. Have a written emergency escape plan, post it on the inside of the closet and review it with every member of the family. It is also a good idea to practice what to do in case of a fire.



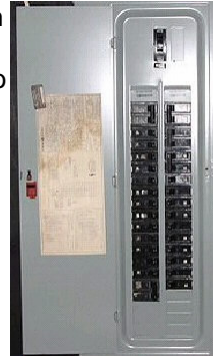
## Installing Fire Extinguishers



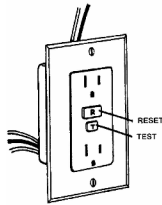
We recommend adding a fire extinguisher on each level of the house. Purchase the largest ones that can be used by each member of the family. Keep one upstairs in a linen or bedroom closet, one downstairs in the kitchen, one in the basement and one in the garage. Be sure to inspect the pressure gage once a year to ensure they are fully charged.

## Test All Electrical Panel Breakers

Test all electrical panel breakers once a year. Trip each breaker and reset them to ensure they are working properly. A defective breaker may trip, but fail to reset. Also, check to see if your electrical panel box was manufactured by Zinco or Federal Pacific. If it was, the panel is considered dangerous and is a potential fire hazard. Contact a qualified licensed electrician for further evaluation and replacement. Search Google for additional information.



## Test all GFCIs and AFCIs



We recommend testing all ground fault and arc fault circuit interrupters once a month. Push the test button to verify they trip properly and then reset them. If they fail to trip or reset, contact a licensed electrician.



## Test Water Heater T & P Valves



We recommend testing water heater temperature and pressure relief valves once a year. Lift the lever on top of the valve and listen to verify water goes through the valve. If the pipe turns up, drain the water out of the piping after testing the valve. If the valve is frozen and cannot be tested or if the valve leaks after testing, it is considered defective and should be replaced by a licensed plumber.

## Add a Carbon Monoxide Detector

We recommend every home with gas heating add a carbon monoxide detector. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends the use of at least one carbon monoxide detector per household located on each floor with a sleeping area. A convenient type to purchase is the "Nighthawk" which can be purchased from Lowes or Home Depot. You simply plug it into an electrical receptacle. It has a red LED readout that can be easily monitored.

