



How to Help Prevent Water Damage

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A heavy rainstorm has finally stopped. While good weather may seem like a relief, the potential for water damage may just be beginning. Storm water runoff can quickly overwhelm natural and manmade systems, leading to flooding and property damage.

It is also responsible for about 25 percent of all property insurance claims. In fact, insurance claim data suggests that water is ten times more likely to damage your home than fire.

During a storm, you can go outside and observe how the water flows. Take note of the different grades and slopes and whether they divert the flowing water away from your home. Look for any low spots that collect or pool water and for any steep slopes that have indications of surface erosion.

Is storm water that falls on impervious surfaces diverted away from your house? This is the work of things like roof gutter downspouts, driveways, walkways and patios. Runoff from these surfaces should be directed to an area that has the ability to absorb or slow the surface flow, such as landscaped areas, and away from your house.

Does your driveway or other impervious surface have a negative pitch back toward the house? Consider installing trench drains or area drains to help prevent pooling and divert water away from the house.

Do you have retaining walls on your property? If so, it is important that the walls have a drainage system in place to alleviate pressure behind the wall. Periodically clean weep holes to ensure they are not clogged.

Do you have a sewer or septic system and property with known high water tables? Have the system checked by a professional. If the groundwater rises too high, it can affect the efficiency and operation of the system.

While you cannot prevent against all damage from storm water runoff during large acts of nature, these steps can help protect your home when storms do hit.

Surface storm water is not the only consideration for protecting your home. It is also important to assess the functionality of your whole home envelope system. Make sure that your house exterior is maintained, including roofing, flashings, weather barriers, windows, doors and sealants.

...And inside these household appliances do not always offer warning signs until the damage has already occurred. That is why it is important to check them regularly.

First, know where the main water supply shut off is located in case of emergency.

If you will be away from home for an extended period, shut off the water supply and drain the pipes.

Also, if your home is protected by a fire sprinkler system, do not turn off the water to this system, and maintain sufficient heat to prevent a freeze-up.

Inspect water heaters, showers, tubs, toilets, sinks and dishwashers annually, and have them repaired if there are any signs of leaks or corrosion.

Check caulking around showers, bathtubs, sinks and toilet bases, and make repairs as needed.

Check appliance hoses and plumbing fittings for breakage, cracking, crimping or bending.

Call Chris Home Inspection to ensure these and other important issues are covered during your next inspection.

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