

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Home-Improvement Expert Offers Tips On Uncovering Potential Problems

(NAPSA)—Home repairs and maintenance are inevitable, but with careful planning and the proper tools, perhaps the next problem can be detected and prevented before it happens.

“The most common complaint from homeowners is that they didn’t know they had a problem until it was too late,” says Ron Hazelton, host of the nationally syndicated television series “Ron Hazelton’s HouseCalls.” “It’s what’s hidden behind things, obstructed from view or in a hard-to-reach place, that can cause potential problems.”

### Get the Gunk Out

Dirty, clogged gutters can cause problems, including flooded basements and damage to the home’s foundation, exterior trim and landscaping. To clean, simply remove all debris with a gutter scoop or small garden trowel so water can drain properly. Plan to clean gutters at least twice a year, more often if the roof is directly beneath trees. Consider installing gutter guards to prevent additional debris from building up.

Don’t forget to inspect one of the most used appliances in the home: the clothes dryer. “The most important maintenance for any dryer is a clear exhaust,” says Hazelton. Many dryer failures and fires usually result from an improperly maintained vent system. Disconnect, clean and inspect the dryer duct once a month. This will dry



**Uncovering potential hidden problems will save you time and money this winter.**

clothing faster, increase life span and, most importantly, reduce fire hazard.

### Keep Out the Cold

Keep cold air out of your house by sealing gaps around doors and windows with weather stripping. Also, inspect the exterior of the house for cracks and use caulk to seal. Proper insulation is crucial when it comes to keeping a house warm throughout the winter and cool in the summer. To find out how much insulation is recommended, visit the U.S. Department of Energy’s Web site at [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov).

But how can you tell if your walls, ceiling and attic already contain enough insulation? The new RIDGID® SeeSnake® micro™ inspection camera allows you to get behind walls or above ceil-

ings to see for yourself. The SeeSnake micro features a mini-camera and bright LED lights on the end of a 3-foot flexible cable that allows users to see around corners and behind walls, and inside ducts, attics and crawl spaces. It fits into almost any space and projects an image of the hidden area onto a handle-mounted LCD screen.

“Insulation is one of the easiest, most cost-effective ways of increasing your home’s energy efficiency, as well as saving money on energy bills,” says Hazelton. “Plus, there’s no need to remove large sections of dry-wall or create gaping holes in your ceiling just to get a peek at your insulation if you have the proper tools.”

### Fire it Up

Remember to replace your furnace filter regularly and have a professional service your heating systems once a year. Check registers, vents and ducts to make sure there is little or no debris. “With a tool like the SeeSnake micro, you can get a peek at these tight spots, and even remove a small piece of debris with their Hook Tip that can pick up, tug or pull small objects,” says Hazelton. “A clean system helps heating and cooling equipment run more efficiently, conserving energy and saving money for homeowners.”

For more tips, visit the Web site [www.RIDGID.com](http://www.RIDGID.com).