

## LOG HOME MAINTENANCE

Fall is a good time to do a final check of the exterior of your home before you settle in to enjoy a warm, dry and comfortable winter from the inside of your home. Since doing any minor exterior maintenance always seems like such a chore in bad weather, it's a good idea to get it done before the rains come and the snow flies.

**EXTERIOR** First, walk slowly around the outside of your house and look carefully at your logwork. Look for any signs of insect trouble such as small holes with wood powder around them. (called frass). Watch for any discolored logs which might indicate mold growth and log finish (stain) failure. If you haven't cleaned the exterior of your logs in a couple of years consider renting a pressure washer for a day. Not only will you wash away any accumulated dirt and grime and make it easier to inspect the logwork for trouble spots, you will remove any buildup of pollen which turns acidic with moisture and can slowly erode your log home finish. Some log maintenance companies suggest washing the exterior of your log home twice a year. Dirt can accumulate on the surface of the finish. As wind and rain hit the dirt particles the movement of the dirt can abrade the finish. The goal at this stage is cleaning, not stripping the logs so make sure you use no more than 500 psi and 15-20° pressure washer tip. (If your pressure washer has a higher rating, stand further back). Note: If you do need to strip and refinish your logs [contact a qualified log home professional](#) for a data sheet and more information. Here we will only be discussing routine maintenance. Once your logwork is clean and has dried check the following areas. You may need a ladder, a hammer and an awl or other pointed tool.

**NOTCHES AND CORNERS** Check corners for any signs of capping, moisture damage and rot. Many roof designs do not adequately protect corners from the weather and any exposed, unprotected horizontal wood surface is a prime candidate for rot problems. Any small gaps that may allow water and/or air infiltration can be filled with log home caulking type sealant. These sealants are designed to adhere well to logs and be able to expand and contract as your logs do from season to season. Several colors are also available to blend (or contrast) with your log home finish. If you suspect rot in this area tap the area with a small hammer and listen for a hollow sound. Next press into the area with an awl or other sharp tool. If the awl sinks and/or your logs sound hollow you probably have a rot problem. Small areas of rot can be stabilized with impel rods or repaired with Wood Epox or Liquid Wood. (Epoxy). Application of these products will depend on the location, size and extent of the problem area. Larger areas will need to be replaced with new logs.

**WALLS** Checks and cracks in logs are natural and to be expected. They normally pose no problems but if you see any up-facing checks that may allow rain to penetrate into the log then seal them with a caulking sealant that matches the color of your finish is one recommended method of sealing to the weather. Another method is to flood the upfacing check with borates, which will protect against insects and rot for up to 40 years. Additionally, flooding the check with a penetrating finish (such as [Defy](#)) will help protect the wood against any water that gets in the check. Finally, in some cases, the use of liquid epoxies, (such as [Liquid Wood](#)), will solidify any punky wood that has occurred in the check.

**CHINKING** If your home has chinking between rounds, verify that it is still sound and adhering well to the logs. Older homes may not have the elastic type of chinking and if yours is cracking and falling out then it's time to replace it. This old fashioned [chinking](#) can be chipped out and then replaced with modern elastomeric chinking. As with the caulking sealant there are several colors to choose from. Chinking is available in 5 gallon buckets and 10 and 30 ounce tubes to suit the size of job you need to do. Your log home professional will assist you in determining the thickness of the chinking you use - it usually depends on the size of the logs.