

Life Expectancy

How long household components and systems should last.



The following material was developed for the National Association of Home Builders and is based on a survey of manufacturers, trade associations and product researchers.

Many factors affect the life expectancy of housing components and need to be considered when making replacement decisions, including the quality of the components, the quality of their installation, their level of maintenance, weather and climatic conditions, and intensity of their use. Some components remain functional but become obsolete because of changing styles and tastes or because of product improvements.

Note that the following life expectancy estimates are provided largely by the industries or manufacturers that make and sell the components listed.

Appliances

Life in years

Dishwashers	10
Garbage Disposal	10
Exhaust fans	20
Refrigerators, standard	17
Freezers	16
Microwave ovens	11
Electric ranges	17
Gas ranges	19
Gas ovens	14
Washers, automatic and compact	13
Dryers	14

Source: Appliance Statistical Review, April 1990

Bathrooms

Life in years

Cast iron bathtubs	50
Fiberglass bathtub and showers	10-15
Shower doors, average quality	25
Toilets	50

Cabinetry

Life in years

Kitchen cabinets	15-20
Medicine cabinets and bath vanities	20

Sources: Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association, Neil Kelly Designers

Countertops

Life in years

Laminate	10-15
Ceramic tile, high-grade installation	Lifetime
Wood/butcher block	20+
Granite	20+

Sources: AFP Associates of Western Plastics, Ceramic Tile Institute of America

Doors

Life in years

Screen	25-50
Interior, hollow core	Less than 30
Interior, solid core	30-lifetime
Exterior, protected	80-100
Exterior, unprotected and exposed	25-30
Folding	30-lifetime
Garage doors	20-50
Garage door opener	10

Sources: Wayne Dalton Corporation, National Wood Window and Door Association, Raynor Garage Doors

Electrical

Life in years

Copper wiring, copper plated, copper clad aluminum, and bare copper	100+
Armored cable (BX)	Lifetime
Conduit	Lifetime

Source: Jesse Aronstein, Engineering Consultant

Floors

Life in years

Oak or pine	Lifetime
Slate flagstone	Lifetime
Vinyl sheet or tile	20-30
Terrazzo	Lifetime
Carpeting (depends on installation, amount of traffic, and quality of carpet)	11
Marble (depends on installation, thickness of marble, and amount of traffic)	Lifetime+

Sources: Carpet and Rug Institute, Congoleum Corporation, Hardwood Plywood Manufacturers Association, Marble Institute, National Terrazzo and Mosaic Association, National Wood Flooring Association, Resilient Floor Covering Institute

Footings and foundation

Life in years

Poured footings and foundations	200
Concrete block	100
Cement	50
Waterproofing, bituminous coating	10
Termite proofing (may have shorter life in damp climates)	5

Source: WR Grace and Company

Heating and air conditioning

Life in years

Central air conditioning unit (newer units should last longer)	15
Window unit	10
Humidifier	8
Electric water heater	14
Gas water heater (depends on type of water heater lining and quality of water)	11-13
Forced air furnaces, heat pump	15
Boilers, hot water or steam (depends on quality of water)	30
Furnaces, gas- or oil-fired	18
Unit heaters, gas or electric	13
Radiant heaters, electric	10
Radiant heaters, hot water or steam	25
Baseboard systems	20
Heat Exchangers, shell-and-tube	24
Pumps, sump and well	10
Burners	21

Sources: Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute, Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration News, Air Movement and Control Association, American Gas Association, American Society of Gas Engineers, American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc., Safe Aire Incorporated

Home security appliances

Life in years

Security systems	14
Smoke detectors	12
Smoke/fire/intrusion systems	10

Insulation

Life in years

For foundations, roofs, ceilings, walls, and floors	Lifetime
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Sources: Insulation Contractors Association of America, North American Insulation Manufacturers Association

Landscaping

Life in years

Wooden decks	15
Brick and concrete patios	24
Concrete walks	24
Gravel walks	4
Asphalt driveways	10
Swimming pools	18
Sprinkler systems	12
Fences	12

Sources: Associated Landscape Contractors of America, Irrigation Association

Masonry

Life in years

Chimney, fireplace, and brick veneer	Lifetime
Brick and stone walls	100+
Stucco	Lifetime

Sources: Brick Institute of America, Architectural Components, National Association of Brick Distributors, National Stone Association

Millwork

Life in years

Stairs, trim	50-100
Disappearing stairs	30-40
Exterior paint on wood, brick, and aluminum	7-10
Interior wall paint (depends on the acrylic content)	5-10
Interior trim and door paint	5-10
Wallpaper	7

Sources: Finnaren and Haley, Glidden Company, The Wall Paper

Plumbing

Life in years

Waste piping, cast iron	75-100
Sinks, enamel steel	5-10
Sinks, enamel cast iron	25-30
Faucets, low quality	13-15
Faucets, high quality	15-20

Sources: American Concrete Pipe Association, Cast Iron Soil and Pipe Institute, Neil Kelly Designers, Thompson House of Kitchens and Baths

Roofing

Life in years

Asphalt and wood shingles and shakes	15-30
Tile (depends on quality of tile and climate)	50
Slate (depends on grade)	50-100

Sheet metal (depends on gauge of metal and quality of fastening and application)	20-50+
Built-up roofing, asphalt	12-25
Asphalt composition shingle	15-30

Source: National Roofing Contractors Association

Rough structure

Life in years

Basement floor systems	Lifetime
Framing, exterior and interior walls	Lifetime

Source: NAHB Research Foundation

Siding

Life in years

Gutters and downspouts	30
Siding, wood (depends on maintenance)	10-100
Siding, steel	50-Lifetime
Siding, aluminum	20-50
Siding, vinyl	50

Sources: Alcoa Building Products, Alside, Inc., Vinyl Siding Institute

Walls

Life in years

Drywall and plaster	30-70
Ceramic tile, high grade installation	Lifetime

Sources: Association of Wall and Ceiling Industries International, Ceramic Tile Institute of America

Windows

Life in years

Window glazing	20
Wood casement	20-50
Aluminum and vinyl casement	20-30
Screen	25-50

Sources: Best Built Products, Optimum Window Manufacturing, Safety Glazing Certification Council, Screen Manufacturers Association

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