

MONSOON SEASON PREP: A HOME REPAIR CHECKLIST TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM HEAVY RAINS

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INTRODUCTION

As the monsoon season approaches in Malaysia, homeowners must take proactive steps to safeguard their properties against the relentless downpours and potential damage that come with this time of year. While the annual rains bring relief from the heat, they also present challenges that can compromise the strength and durability of your home, including roof leaking, wall cracks, toilet leaking, and balcony issues. Timely interventions such as waterproofing repair, PU injection, grouting, and engaging a qualified waterproofing specialist or repair contractor are essential to prevent water penetration and further damage.

By conducting thorough inspections and coordinating with professional repair specialists for building repair, roof repair, or balcony repair, homeowners can protect their properties from water damage, mould growth, and costly issues during Malaysia's heavy monsoon rains. Below is an example checklist you can use for your preparations.

Rainy Season

CHECKLIST

	General Property	Notes	Priority
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clean gutters and secure downspouts	Ensure that water doesn't collect around your	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roof	Check for leaks; flashing	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chimney	Clear any blockage	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Windows, doorframes & baseboards	Ensure they are sealed	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stock up on batteries & flashlights		High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Invest in a generator	In case of power outage	Med-Hi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Storm drains	Have checked/and/or contact if they are obstructed	Med-Hi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare first aid kit		Med-Hi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water	Have ample supply of clean drinking water	Med-Hi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Purchase battery operated radio	In case of power outage	Med-Hi
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have emergency phone numbers handy		Med-Hi
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscaping/Garden Check	Notes	Priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check retaining walls and fences	Critical if you live on a hillside	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Drainage	Make sure water can be diverted away from your house	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Property Drains	Check they are clear. Install one if you are at risk of	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slopes	Gullyng, surface cracks and slumping - can mean	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get sandbags and plastic sheeting to	Place plastic sheeting on slopes, secure with sandbags	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cover bare ground with mulch	Mulch and planting groundcover will prevent mudflows	High
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear your yard of debris that isn't	Secure furniture, dispose of broken tree limbs, branches	Med-Hi
<input type="checkbox"/>			

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Figure 1: Rainy season checklist ^[1]

ROOF REINFORCEMENT AND INSPECTION

Your roof is the primary defence against monsoon downpours, making thorough pre-season inspections essential for preventing water damage. Start by carefully examining all roofing materials for signs of wear, particularly missing, cracked, or loose shingles that require immediate replacement to maintain a watertight surface ^[2]. In addition, pay special attention to vulnerable areas like flashing around chimneys, vents, and skylights, sealing any gaps with durable, weather-resistant compounds to block potential entry points for water. Furthermore, ensure optimal drainage by thoroughly cleaning gutters and downspouts of all debris that could cause backups during heavy rainfall, while also trimming overhanging branches that might break under storm conditions and damage the roof.

For added protection on ageing roofs, consider applying a waterproof sealant to reinforce vulnerable areas and extend the roof's lifespan through the challenging monsoon season. These proactive measures work together to create a robust barrier against water infiltration, safeguarding your home's interior from costly moisture damage.

LANDSCAPE AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT

Proper yard grading is essential for directing rainwater away from your home's foundation, which helps prevent water accumulation that could compromise its structural integrity. Begin by ensuring your landscape slopes gradually away from the building, with particular attention to areas near the foundation. To maintain unobstructed water flow, routinely clear leaves and debris from gutters, downspouts, and storm drains before the rainy season begins. For properties with persistent drainage issues, consider installing French drains or creating rain gardens in low-lying areas to naturally absorb and redirect excess water. Prune trees and shrubs regularly, especially those near structures or power lines, by removing weak branches that could break during storms while ensuring healthy root systems to withstand heavy winds.

In flood-prone zones, elevate electrical components and appliances above potential water levels, and consider installing a sump pump as an additional safeguard. Implement a routine inspection schedule after heavy rainfall, carefully examining areas where water tends to pool and promptly addressing any signs of erosion or improper drainage. These proactive measures work together to create a comprehensive defence system against monsoon-related water damage throughout your property. The figure below shows a French drain.



Figure 2: French drain installation ^[3]

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Every household should create a comprehensive emergency kit containing essential supplies such as drinking water, non-perishable food items, flashlights with extra batteries, a first-aid kit, and a battery-operated radio to stay informed during power outages. Additionally, maintain an updated list of critical contacts including local emergency services, utility providers, and trusted repair contractors who can respond quickly to storm-related damages. It's equally important to review your home insurance policy to verify coverage for monsoon-related damages, with special consideration given to adding flood insurance if your property is in a vulnerable area.

All family members should be familiar with established evacuation routes and emergency procedures, including alternative exit strategies from your home and neighbourhood. Conduct regular drills to ensure everyone understands the emergency plan, including where to locate the supply kit and how to shut off utilities if necessary. These preparedness measures provide vital protection and peace of mind when severe weather strikes, enabling your household to respond effectively to monsoon emergencies while minimizing potential risks to life and property.

CONCLUSION

Effective monsoon preparedness demands comprehensive attention to every element of your home's defence system, from the roof to the foundation. These outlined measures provide a complete strategy for identifying and addressing vulnerabilities before heavy rains arrive. By implementing these preventive actions, homeowners can significantly reduce weather-related damage while safeguarding their property and protecting their loved ones. It's important to remember that consistent maintenance and timely upgrades form an ongoing cycle of protection that yields long-term benefits through minimised repair expenses and enhanced household safety throughout each monsoon season.

References:

- [1] Gardener's Guild (2022). *Prepare for rain — the ultimate checklist to protect your property*. Retrieved on 15th September 2024 from <https://www.gardenersguild.com/prepare-for-rain-the-ultimate-checklist-to-protect-your-property/>
- [2] Prairie Exteriors. (n.d.). *How to repair roof shingles the right way*. Retrieved on 15th September 2024 from <https://prairieexteriors.com/how-to-repair-roof-shingles/>
- [3] Isbir, M. (n.d.). *Exterior French drain types explained by a civil engineer*. Retrieved on 15th September 2024 from <https://www.isbirconstruction.com/press-room/exterior-french-drain-types-explained-by-a-civil-engineer/>