

Home Winterizing Checklist

Before the weather grows colder it's important to prepare for the winter months to prevent costly damage. Below are the fall preventative home maintenance steps that every homeowner should check out.

Be Prepared

- Buy a snow shovel or snow blower and a bag of ice melt now so you'll have it before winter weather hits.
- Keep extra water and canned food in storage just in case.

Gutters and Downspouts

- Clean gutters and downspouts frequently throughout the Fall season to prevent buildup of leaves and other debris. Neglected gutters can lead to wood rot problems and pest infestations, not to mention ruined gutters.
- Be sure water is not coming down behind gutters and that all support brackets are securely in place.
- Ensure that water drains properly and doesn't pool. Pooling can cause damage to foundations, driveways, and walkways.

Windows and Doors

- Change summer screens to cool weather storm windows and doors.
- Inspect and repair any loose or damaged windows or door frames.
- Install weather stripping or caulking around windows and doors to prevent drafts and to lower heating bills.

Heating Systems

- Replace the filter in your furnace.
- Consider having a heating professional check your heating system to ensure optimal performance and discover minor problems before they turn into costly major repairs.
- Clean your ducts to better your heating system's efficiency as well as to reduce household dust and to provide relief to those with respiratory problems.
- Maintain temperature @ 55 degrees during winter.

Plumbing

- To prevent pipes freezing and bursting, ensure that the pipes are well insulated.
- Know how to locate and turn off the water shut-off valve in case pipes do freeze.

Chimney and Fireplace

- Call a professional in to inspect and clean your chimney. Fireplaces that are regularly used during the season should have an annual cleaning to prevent dangerous chimney fires.
- Test your fireplace flue for a tight seal when closed.

Attic ventilation

- Be sure attic insulation doesn't cover vents in the eaves to prevent winter ice dams on the roof.
- Be sure ridge vents and vents at eaves are free of plants and debris.
- Check bird and rodent screens for attic vents to prevent any unwanted guests.

Landscape and Yardwork

- Although grass appears to stop growing in the fall, the roots are actually growing deeper to prepare for winter. Now is the best time to fertilize and reseed your lawn.
- Prune your trees and shrubs after the leaves turn to encourage healthy growth.
- Trim any tree limbs that are dangerously close to power lines or the roof of your house. Heavy snow and ice can cause damage in the winter.
- Wrap immature trees from October through April.
- Remove all garden hoses from the water faucets as water can freeze in that line and cause problems.
- Blow out a sprinkler system; Which involves closing the mainline sprinkler shutoff valve and attaching the air compressor to the blow out adapter. Blow out the valve in increments of two minutes or less and repeat the procedure up to three times, and then turn off the timer. Always remember to wear proper eye protection when blowing out a sprinkler system and always turn off the sprinkler zone valve before beginning the procedure.