

# Winter Home Maintenance



It's easy to forget, or ignore, the importance of preparing your house for winter. However, maintaining your home during winter will help you avoid expensive repairs or surprises. Using this checklist will improve home efficiency, save you money and keep you comfortable as the mercury plummets.

## Annual Tasks

### Interior

- Reverse the direction of ceiling fans to force warm air down into the room.
- Inspect windows and doors for cracks or leaks. Replace weather stripping if needed.
- Install or increase attic insulation or have a professional inspection if you're concerned about heat loss through the roof.
- Inspect pipes that run on exterior walls for vulnerabilities to freezing.
- Hire a pro to inspect your furnace or heating system.
- Check batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Turn off water valves that supply water to spigots.
- Pour water in your sump pit to make sure the pump works correctly.
- Store window-mounted AC units.
- If your HVAC system has a humidifier, get it inspected and calibrated. Make sure the drain line is clear.

### Exterior

- Replace window screens with storm windows.
- Drain then store garden hoses in a covered area.
- Get your chimney cleaned if you rely on a fireplace or a wood stove for heat.
- Identify tree hazards that pose risk to your home from heavy snow or strong wind.
- Screen intake vents to prevent rodents.
- Make sure your snow blower or plow truck is ready to go.
- Clean your gutters and downspouts to facilitate water runoff in the spring.
- Clean debris from flat roofs or roof valleys where leaves can collect and hold moisture.
- Store patio furniture in the garage or garden shed.

## Ongoing Tasks

These tasks require frequent inspection. How often will depend on the severity of the weather, wind and precipitation. Use your best judgment. If you can't decide, we recommend reviewing this checklist at least once a week:

### Interior

- Monitor windows and doors for drafts.
- Replace your HVAC air filter every three months.
- During deep cold spells (<15° for more than 24 hours) keep all interior doors open to encourage heat circulation.

### Exterior

- Continue to monitor the roof for any ice dams or damage. Icicles are an indication of a poorly insulated attic and a potential ice dam threat.
- For heavy snow years, make sure your roof can sustain the weight. Otherwise, get a roof rake to remove large snow loads.
- Keep large snowdrifts from piling up against your home.
- Use sand or gravel on walkways for traction. Salt/ ice-melt is also effective but has a narrow operating temperature range and isn't very environmentally friendly.
- Keep driveways and walkways clear of snow between storms. Maintain your snow removal equipment.