

Winterizing Maintenance

Whether we like it or not, cooler temperatures are moving in and winter will soon be on its way too. Now is the perfect time to think about winterizing your home so you'll be comfortable and safe all season long.



Furnace Inspection

- Consider switching out your thermostat for a programmable thermostat.
- If your home is heated by a hot-water radiator, bleed the valves by opening them slightly, and when water appears, close them.
- Remove all flammable material from the area surrounding your furnace.

Exterior, Doors and Windows

- Inspect for/seal exterior crevice cracks and exposed entry points around pipes.
- Use weather-stripping around doors to prevent cold air from entering the home and caulk windows.
- Switch out summer screens with glass replacements from storage. If you have storm windows, install them.

Prevent Plumbing Freezes

- Locate your water main in the event you need to shut it off in an emergency.
- Drain all garden hoses.
- Insulate exposed plumbing pipes.
- Drain air conditioner pipes and, if your AC has a water shut-off valve, turn it off.
- If you go on vacation, leave the heat on, set to at least 55 degrees.

Service Weather-Specific Equipment

- Service or tune-up snow blowers. Remember last year?

Install Smoke and CO Detectors

- Some cities require a smoke detector in every room.
- Buy extra smoke detector batteries and change them when daylight savings ends.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector near your furnace and/or water heater.
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to make sure they work.

Check Foundations

- Rake away all debris and edible vegetation from the foundation.
- Seal up entry points to keep small animals from crawling under the house.

Get the Fireplace Ready

- Cap or screen the top of the chimney to keep out rodents and birds.
- If the chimney hasn't been cleaned for a while, call a chimney sweep to remove soot and creosote.
- Inspect the fireplace damper for proper opening and closing.

Landscaping/Outdoor Surfaces

- Trim trees if branches hang too close to the house or electrical wires.
- Seal driveways, brick patios and wood decks.
- Move sensitive potted plants indoors or to a sheltered area.

Roof, Gutters & Downspouts

- If your weather temperature will fall below 32 degrees in the winter, adding extra insulation to the attic will prevent warm air from creeping to your roof and causing ice dams.
- Check flashing to ensure water cannot enter the home.
- Replace worn roof shingles or tiles.
- Clean out the gutters and use a hose to spray water down the downspouts to clear away debris.
- Consider installing leaf guards on the gutters or extensions on the downspouts to direct water away from the home.

Prepare an Emergency Kit

- Buy indoor candles and matches/lighter for use during a power shortage.
- Find the phone numbers for your utility companies and tape them near your phone or inside the phone book.
- Buy battery back-up to protect computers and sensitive electronic equipment.
- Store extra bottled water and non-perishable food supplies (including pet food, if you have a pet), blankets and a first-aid kit in a dry and easy-to-access location.
- Prepare an evacuation plan in the event of an emergency.