

Home Maintenance Checklist

Preparing Your Home for Winter

From clearing the gutters to installing new furnace filters and everything in between, knocking out this homeowner's winter checklist will help you keep your home warm and running efficiently this winter.

Check out these winter home maintenance tips.

- Winterize air conditioning units. Remove any window AC units and store them in a dry location.
- Prevent plumbing freezes by insulating exposed plumbing pipes and know where your water main shutoff is in case of emergencies.
- Tune-up your furnace. Hire an HVAC professional to thoroughly inspect your furnace to eliminate unexpected repair needs and keep it functioning properly all winter.
- If your water heater is in the garage, use an exterior water-tight blanket to help keep the heat in.
- Install and test carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of your home. Test the alarms regularly to keep you and your family safe from this silent killer.
- Install new furnace filters. Changing that filter monthly in the winter helps keep your furnace running efficiently in the colder months when it's needed the most.
- Secure dryer vents and air intakes to prevent animals from entering your home for warmth.
- Reverse your ceiling fans. The counterclockwise direction is used in the summer to push down cold air. Reverse the blades' direction to clockwise in the winter to recirculate heat and take some load off your heating system.
- Inspect windows and doors for drafts. Find the source of the leak, then seal it with new weather stripping or caulking.
- Insulate air ducts. This is especially important for ducts in the basement, floors, and ceilings to help regulate temperatures by preventing any hot air from leaking out. Hire an HVAC expert to make sure the job is done right.
- Use heavy fabric curtains over the windows to keep the heat in. Blinds can also assist in keeping warmth inside the home.
- Consider adding more insulation to your attic, if needed, to reduce heating bills.
- Buy a smart thermostat. Today's smart thermostats learn your routines, automatically turning up the heat as you get home from work and turning it back down again when you normally go to sleep. And if you leave and forget to turn down the furnace, you can adjust it from anywhere with a phone app.
- Get your chimney cleaned if you rely on a fireplace or a wood stove for some of your heat.
- Drain your garden hoses and store them in the garage or a covered area. Shut off exterior water spigots.
- When cleaning windows in freezing temperatures, mix one part rubbing alcohol, one part water, and a few drops of your favorite dish liquid. Apply mixture to windows using a spray bottle or sponge and use a squeegee to remove streaks. Always avoid applying hot water to your windows as they may crack.
- Remove debris from flat roofs or roof valleys where leaves can collect and hold moisture and address tree hazards that could pose a risk to your home from a heavy snow load or strong winds.
- Clean debris from gutter downspouts and make sure water is directed away from your home's foundation.

