

Prepare your home for winter!





## Important steps how to prepare your home for winter:

### Exterior doors and windows:

Caulk around window and door glass and trim, and all exterior trim. Install or replace weather stripping on all doors and windows. Check for cracks around pipes and electrical outlets entering or exiting the walls. Inspect exterior for crevice cracks an exposed entry points around pipes and seal them. Replace cracked glass in windows and, if you end up replacing the entire window, prime and paint exposed wood. If your home has a basement, consider protecting ist window wells by covering them with plastic shields. Switch out summer screens with glass replacements from storage. Install storm window and doors if you have them. Consider purchasing storm windows if you have older windows that are not made from modern insulated glass.

### Heating:

Have your heating system checked by a licensed heating/air-conditioning professional. Most furnace manufacturers recommend at least annual inspections. Clean ducts, stock up on furnace filters and change them monthly. 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.

### Fireplace:

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. Buy firewood or chop wood. Store it in a dry place away from the exterior of your home. Inspect the fireplace damper for proper opening and closing. Check the mortar between bricks and tuck point, if necessary.

### Chimney:

Have your chimneys inspected by a chimney service and, if necessary, cleaned.



**Gutters and Roof:**

Check gutters and clean them if necessary. Clogged gutters can result in basement flooding when the snow melts. 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.

Replace any roof shingles that are missing or damaged.

If your weather temperature will fall below 32 degrees in the winter, adding an extra insulation to the attic will prevent warm air from creeping to you roof and causing ice dams. Add a second layer of insulation to your attic. R-30 insulation is considered the minimum. If your house is relatively new, it probably conforms. If not, consider adding insulation. Check flashing to ensure water cannot enter the home.

**Water:**

Check the foundation for areas where water may puddle. Drain and shut off outdoor water faucets.

**Trees:**

Trim trees away from the house or electrical wires. Ask a gardener when your trees should be pruned to prevent winter injury. Have dead trees and branches removed by professional tree trimmers, or do it yourself. Plant spring flower bulbs and lift bulbs that cannot winter over such as dahlias in areas where the ground freezes. Seal driveways, brick patios and wood decks. Don't automatically remove dead vegetation from gardens as some provide attractive scenery in an otherwise dreary, snow-drenched yard. Move sensitive potted plants indoors or to a sheltered area.

**Pipes:**

Insulate any water pipes that are exposed to freezing cold. Locate your water main in the event you need to shut it off in an emergency. 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.



**Alarm System:**

Replace the batteries in carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, and check to make sure these are all in working order.

Install a carbon monoxide detector near your furnace and / or water heater. Check fire extinguishers and charge and replace as necessary. It is recommended to change them after 10 years latest.

**Foundations:**

Rake away all debris and edible vegetation from the foundation. Seal up entry points to keep small animals from crawling under the house. Tuck point or seal foundation cracks. Mice can slip through space as thin as a dime. Inspect sill plates for dry rot or pest infestation. Secure crawlspace entrances.

**Miscellaneous:**

Make sure you are stocked with rock salt, sand, snow shovels and any other items you will need during the winter. Drain gas from lawnmower. And service or tune-up snow blowers. Clean dry and store summer gardening equipment. Sharpen ice choppers.