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Preparing Your Home for Fall and Winter

April 1, 2021



The fall and winter seasons are such an exciting time of year. From the start of school and sporting events to the string of family holidays, it just feels like fun things are always happening. With so much going on, preparing your home for cold weather may fall by the wayside. But if you can put aside a few busy days to get it done, you'll thank yourself down the road! Here are a few home maintenance tasks you should keep in mind as the cool season approaches.

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Check Your HVAC System and Heater

Call a professional to inspect your [heating system](#). If your heating system isn't working properly, your family will be uncomfortable and you will probably lose money trying force your tired heater to do its job. Get on top of this before the weather turns cold and repairmen are in high demand.

Make sure your ducts are well-sealed and insulated. Air leaks in ducts can reduce a home's energy efficiency by a startling amount—around 20 percent. If you live in an area that gets plenty of ice and snow, place more insulation in your attic to prevent freezing and ice dams on the roof. While you're at it, close up any air leaks by installing fresh weatherstripping on doors and windows and using caulk to seal cracks in surfaces.

Roof and Gutter Maintenance

Before the cold weather sneaks in, inspect your roof closely. Hunt for loose shingles and replace them, check for damage caused by hail or storm debris, and clear out your gutters. If you find yourself cleaning them out regularly during fall, install leaf guards so you don't have to pull out the ladder once a month.

Sprinkler System Winterization

Proper maintenance of your sprinkler system for winter ensures that faucets and sprinklers won't be damaged when you need to use them again. The first step to winterizing your system is turning off the main water valve. Set your automatic controller to rain mode, or for a bit more finality, just disconnect it for the season. Open the outside faucets to drain the water currently stored inside, and twist the shutoff valve to close it off when you're done.

Fireplace Inspection

Even if you live in a somewhat temperate climate and only use your fireplace a few times per year, annual inspections are still a must. Build-ups and blockages can be dangerous to you and your family, so it's best to hire a professional to perform this service. They can check for and get rid of the flammable creosote residue that comes from burning wood. If you have a problem with birds settling down in your chimney, install a chimney cap.

Walkway and Driveway Repairs

Uneven walkway sections, cracks in the driveway, and loose railings or steps can all become exponentially more hazardous in the winter, especially when it ices over. To protect the ones you love as well—and save yourself from even more intense repairs in the future—deal with any of these weak spots before the cold weather comes sweeping through.

The most important things to remember are: make sure your family is safe, prevent yourself from wasting money on inefficient heating, and save yourself from larger repair tasks and investments in the future by checking these important tasks off the list now.

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