

Winterizing Your Home

Before we know it, winter will be upon us. Whether it be; saving energy, keeping the inside of your home comfortable, basic maintenance, or preventative maintenance, there are many things you can do to your home to get it ready for the cold weather and make the transition into spring easier as well. Be sure to take advantage of the comfortable Fall temperatures to take care of these tasks so you are not stuck playing catch-up once the cold weather arrives. If you are unsure of how to perform any of the tasks below, just do a Google search on the topic and you are on your way to energy savings, winter comfort and protecting your house from winter damage.

- Clean gutters and downspouts once leaves are finished falling. This will allow for excess water from melting snow and spring rain to flow freely and not cause any problems.
- Disconnect hoses from outside faucets and turn off water and bring hoses inside. If you'd rather not turn the water off on these faucets, you can also purchase an inexpensive insulated faucet cover at many home improvement stores.
- Be sure to purchase your snow shovels and salt early in the season before the bad weather hits or you might find yourself without since stores will run out of these items quickly once the snow comes.
- Have your furnace & AC units inspected once a year by a trained professional to keep them running efficiently and to avoid problems during months that you really rely on them.
- Replace furnace filters. Once a month is recommended during heating season. A genuine HEPA filter will do the best job at trapping all types and sizes of airborne particles.
- Mind your thermostat. You can save a lot of money by just turning it down one or two degrees. For the best money savings, a programmable thermostat will adjust the temperature to your preferred settings at different times of the day and it's one less thing to remember.
- Have chimneys and woodstoves cleaned early in the season. If you have a fireplace, close the damper when the fireplace is not in use. If you like using a fireplace, consider getting an insert that will direct the heat into your house instead of just sending it up the chimney.
- Close off rooms that aren't used and shut the vents. Be sure there are no water pipes in these rooms that could freeze.
- Use draft stoppers under doors where cold drafts are coming through. You can Google "draft stopper" for some great DIY options.
- If your ceiling fans have a switch on them that allows them to be run in reverse, take advantage of that. The hot air collecting near the ceiling will be circulated back into the living space—cutting your heating costs as much as 10 percent!
- Wrap with insulation any water pipes that run through unheated areas of the house to help prevent them from freezing during the winter (this can be disastrous). Pre-split insulation pieces that just slide right onto the pipes is available at most home improvement stores.



- If there is any caulk or weather stripping around doors or windows that has broken down, wore out and become inefficient, replace it.
- Older windows are one of the biggest culprits of home energy inefficiency. If you have older windows that are somewhat drafty and getting them replaced with a more energy efficient type is out of the budget, covering them with plastic for the winter will help keep out the drafts. You can pick up kits with everything you need at most home improvement stores for a few bucks. Adding storm windows and doors is also a good option to keep the heat in and cold out.
- Be sure your snowblower or any other mechanical equipment you use to move snow is in working order well before the first snow. Start and operate briefly ahead of time. If you have any issues or starting is a problem, have them serviced by a trained professional. If you are unsure of how to do the work yourself, be sure to schedule tune-up appointments well in advance of when you will need your equipment as the shops are very busy at this time of year.
- Increase the longevity of outdoor furniture, grills, lawn and garden décor, etc by bringing it inside for the winter. Store it in the garage or basement.
- Cover your air-conditioning unit. Covers are available at your local home improvement store. *Be sure to remove it in the Spring BEFORE you operate your air conditioning!*
- Keep extra water and canned food in storage and keep the pantry stocked in case you get snowed in or if power goes out for several days. A battery operated emergency radio is an ideal addition to your household as well. It never hurts to be prepared for an emergency!



Brought to you by thecountrylivingresource.com