

Winterize Your Home Checklist



Exterior maintenance

- Fill all the cracks and crevices in your foundation to prevent your house from leaking heat and sucking up extra energy. Seal hard-to-reach or oddly-shaped gaps with an expandable foam.
- Have your chimney cleaned and inspected by a professional chimney sweep. Before you light the first log, be sure the chimney cap is intact, and your chimney liner, firebox, smoke chamber, and damper are all in good working condition.
- Clean your gutters, then install an ice shield on your roof to protect against ice dams that form at the edge of a roof and prevent melting snow from draining.
- Branches that loom over rooftops, power lines and driveways can snap under the weight of snow. Trim your branches back to avoid the risk of seriously damaging anything beneath them.
- Shelter foliage from falling ice and snow under a reusable A-frame structure. Wrap twine around the middle of tall and narrow greenery to keep individual branches from breaking under the weight of heavy snow.

Don't forget to protect small shrubs from the wind by wrapping them with burlap and stapling the material to stakes.
- Cold air can seep in through unsealed cracks in and around your air conditioner, so either remove it from your window for the winter, or securely wrap it with an approved tarp or plastic cover. If your unit has a water valve, shut off the valve and drain it.

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Interior maintenance

- Flush your water heater to clear any built-up sediment, then wrap it with an appropriately sized insulation blanket to avoid heat escaping from the unit and using more energy than it needs.
- Bring your home into the 21st century with a smart thermostat. Many options can modify the comfort level based on occupancy — increasing the warmth when you're around and lowering the temperature when you leave — to save costs and simplify home life.
- Avoid unwanted airflow in and out of your home by installing a storm door and sealing gaps around door and window frames with weatherstripping. Putting in a door sweep can also prevent chills (and pests) from entering underneath the door.
- Stop heat from rising out of your home by adding extra insulation between your walls, attic floor and basement ceiling.
- Place foam insulators behind your light switch plates and electrical outlet covers.
- Set the rotation of your blades to spin clockwise to distribute warm air back down into the room. (And take a minute to dust while you're up there flipping the switch.)
- Frozen pipes — and the mess and property damage they cause — are one of the biggest headaches associated with subzero temperatures. Use foam-rubber insulation to prevent the exposed metal from getting too cold.
- Change your furnace filters often to allow unimpeded airflow and reduce energy demand. Swap out fiberglass or paper furnace filters every one to two months; clean or change electrostatic or HEPA filters every two to four months.
- Schedule an energy audit with your local service provider to identify any inefficiencies that you may have overlooked in your own visual inspection. A professional assessment can lead to upgrades that can notably reduce future energy bills.

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