



## Winter home maintenance tips

### BUNDLE UP WITH THESE HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS

Following are five key home maintenance categories to focus on for this winter:

#### Your Heating System

##### Before winter:

- Have your furnace or boiler checked and serviced by a licensed contractor at least once a year, preferably before the heating season begins.
- Clean or replace the furnace filter on forced hot air systems.
- Have your chimney checked and serviced by a licensed contractor at least once a year. Pay particular attention to having creosote build-up removed for chimneys servicing woodstoves and fireplaces.

##### During winter:

- Have your fuel tanks filled and keep an eye on levels throughout the winter.
- Set your heat no lower than 55 degrees – the temperature inside the walls where water piping is located is colder than the living spaces; open doors to unoccupied rooms to keep an even temperature throughout the house.
- Maintain your wood-burning or pellet stoves according to the manufacturer's instructions.

#### Your Insulation:

- Add extra insulation in the attic to guard against ice dams. If too much heat escapes into the attic, it can warm the ice and snow on the roof. When it refreezes, it can cause an ice dam, which can lead to water damage inside your home or possibly even a roof collapse.
- Add weather stripping around doors and caulk windows to guard against drafts and heat loss.
- Remove screens from windows, and install storm windows.

#### Your Utilities:

- Check for water leaks and fix problems immediately; wrap water piping in UL-Listed heat tape and insulate if it is exposed in unheated areas such as garages, crawl spaces or attics. Use only thermostatically controlled heat tape if your water piping is plastic and follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Learn how to shut off your water and know where your pipes are located in case they do freeze; you may be able to prevent water damage.

#### Your Winter Safety Measures:

- Trim trees and remove dead branches so they do not damage your home or injure someone if they fall because of ice, snow or wind.
- Keep gutters clear of leaves, sticks and other debris to ensure melting snow can drain properly. Make sure downspouts direct water away from the foundation.
- Repair steps and handrails to make them safer in the ice and snow.
- Check smoke detectors, fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries to ensure they are operating properly.

#### Your Key Supplies and Equipment:

- Make sure you have snow shovels and a roof rake on hand. Stock your ice melting compound to melt ice on walkways.
- Have your snow blower and generator serviced and any necessary repairs made.
- Keep fuel for snow blowers and generators in approved safety containers and away from heat or flame producing devices. Do not store fuel in your basement.

Visit our [Prepare & Prevent site](#) for more tips and information on how to help protect your home.

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