

Tips for Winterizing Your Home



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Colors are changing, leaves are falling, and Old Man Winter is right around the corner. Autumn is the best time to prepare your home for the cold. Before the temperatures dip too far south. Follow these simple guidelines to winterize your home and save money on utilities.

Step #1: Clean the Gutters

Once the leaves begin to fall, you will need clear gutters to allow rain and melting snow to properly drain. Clean out gutters by scooping out loose debris, washing out the gutter with a hose, and flushing out the downspouts. Another option you might consider is installing gutter covers which allow water to flow through, but keep leaves and other debris out.

Step #2: Insulate Pipes

Cold weather can spell disaster for exposed pipes. And as anyone who has experienced it already knows, a burst pipe can be a nightmare. To protect your pipes, wrap and insulate them with heating tape. Check for leaks and cracks so that minor repairs can be made before Jack Frost causes major damage.

Step #3: Trim Tree Branches

Winter storms can pack quite a punch, sometimes powerful enough to knock down tree branches and other debris. Falling limbs can damage homes, cars, or even innocent bystanders. Autumn is a great time to check your trees and other landscaping for weak branches. Trim branches that hang over your home or that look as though they may snap.

Step #4: Insulate Your Home

Cut heating costs this winter by checking the insulation in attics

and basements. Proper insulation keeps heat from escaping and keeps your home warmer. The Insurance Information Institute recommends that attics be kept 5 to 10 degrees warmer than the outside air to prevent snow from melting and re-freezing, which can cause significant damage to your roof.

Step #5: Clean Out Chimneys, Furnaces, Boilers and Heaters

Before winter arrives, have your chimney or furnace checked. Servicing them once a year can prevent smoke and other damage to your home, helping to ensure your home stays warm. Make sure to keep your home's temperature at 65 degrees or higher to prevent pipes from freezing.

Step #6: Seal Windows and Doors

Make sure that your windows and doors are properly sealed by double-checking the weather stripping. Use weather stripping and caulking around windows and doors to prevent heat from escaping in cold months, saving you money on your energy bill.

Step #7: Prepare your lawn and landscaping

Cold temperatures cause grass and other plants in your landscape to go dormant. Spend a few hours preparing your lawn for beautiful greenery next year. Start by aerating. Renting an aerator is a cost-effective and efficient way to reduce thatch and provide extra space in the soil for water and oxygen to reach the roots. After aerating, spread a quality winter fertilizer to give your grass the nutrients it needs to grow strong.

Step #8: Winterize your deck

The harsh winter elements can take a major toll on decking, so it's important to protect it. With a little time and effort, your deck will make it through winter unscathed and ready for outdoor fun in spring. To keep the structure's integrity intact and wood looking beautiful, clean and seal your deck before winter arrives.