

Your Winter Home Maintenance Checklist

Here are tips to get keep your home and family safe from the cold temperatures ahead. In addition to the items listed below, remember that power outages are common during winter storms, so make sure you're prepared with a survival kit. Your winter home maintenance checklist should include stocking up on bottled water, non-perishable food, flashlights, first-aid supplies, batteries and a smart phone charger. OK, OK ... so we're in the south ... don't laugh, it's happened!

EXTERIOR

- ___ Trim any tree limbs that are dangerously close to power lines or the roof of your house. Heavy snow and ice can cause damage in the winter.
- ___ Remove and store garden hoses from outdoor faucets, drain the hoses and cover/insulate the faucets.
- ___ Drain your irrigation system to winterize it (or have your professional irrigation specialist do it).
- ___ Weatherproof exterior pipes. Freezing temperatures can cause serious problems for your external pipes. Frozen pipes can crack, and once they thaw they can release hundreds of gallons of water in a single day which can lead to serious structural damage.
- ___ Clean and store patio or deck furniture. Empty planters and pots to prevent cracks from freezing dirt. Clean and cover grill if it won't be used during the cold weather.

INTERIOR

- ___ In your attic, be sure the insulation doesn't cover vents in the eaves to prevent winter ice dams on the roof.
- ___ To prevent pipes freezing and bursting, ensure the pipes are well insulated.
- ___ Know how to locate and turn off the water shut-off valve in case pipes do freeze.
- ___ If you haven't checked your home for radon, winter is a good time to do so — as the weather turns cooler and windows stay shut, radon is more likely to become trapped in your home.
- ___ If applicable, this is an excellent time to check your whole-house humidifier, space heaters, generator and sump pump to make sure they are in proper working condition.
- ___ Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct. Clean out all of the dust and lint trapped in the vent and exhaust duct.
- ___ Inspect your insulation. If your insulation is insufficient, your heating system will have to work overtime this winter. By adding some insulation to your attic, walls and crawlspace, you can save money on heating costs.
- ___ Take advantage of being indoors ... clean out and organize your closets and pantry. Don't forget your sock drawer!