

Prepare now to keep warm and cozy this winter

Get your house ready before it gets really cold and those big heating bills arrive.

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As the days grow shorter and the air crisper, it's time to think about getting your home ready for winter.

"Preparing your home for fall and winter can be helpful to you," says Carole McCabe, regional vice president of Coldwell Banker Gundaker. "It's a time to think about simple maintenance items to prevent serious damage later on."

McCabe suggests starting with the exterior of your home. Clean out the gutters to prevent water overflow. If you don't, water damage can occur all the way down to your basement. Keep your sidewalks clear of debris to prevent injuries. And have your furnace checked by a professional.

"Many folks forget to drain the water heater at the bottom," says McCabe. If you don't, it can cause rust buildup.

Cosmetic changes are also on the top of McCabe's list of fall improvements. Scrape exterior peeling paint. Not only will this improve the appearance of your home, but it also saves the wood.

WE PREPARED A CHECKOFF LIST TO HELP YOU WINTERIZE YOUR HOME

- Change the refrigerator water filter.
- Change your air conditioner filter.
- Get your barbecue pit ready for next summer. Cover and store.
- Clean out the garage including oil stains and grease spots.
- Stock up on furnace filters.
- Get the fireplace ready. Screen the top of the chimney to keep out rodents and birds. Consider calling a chimney sweep to remove soot and creosote. Check the fireplace damper for proper opening and closing.
- Protect basement windows by



covering them with plastic. If you have storm windows, install them now. Pack away the screens.

- Clean out the gutters. Clear away debris. Consider installing leaf guards on the gutters or extensions on the downspouts to direct water away from the home.
- Drain gasoline from lawn mowers.
- Replace or purchase snow shovels

- Buy bags of ice melt or sand. Don't wait for the first winter storm.
- Install smoke

and carbon monoxide detectors.

Buy extra batteries.

- Drain garden hoses.
- Trim trees and bushes. (Check with a gardening center when your trees should be pruned to prevent winter injury.)
- Plant spring flower bulbs.
- Seal driveways, brick patios and wood decks.
- Move potted plants indoors.
- Cover patio furniture or move it indoors.
- Prepare an emergency kit for a power outage. You can make your own by adding candles, matches, lighter, bottled water, flashlights, first-aid kit, etc.

REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION THIS FALL

- Add extra insulation to the attic.
- Seal doors and window cracks.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs.
- Install programmable thermostats to help to conserve energy.
- Insulate your pipes. Hot water



pipes lose heat
when they pass
through unheated areas.

- Replace the lint filters and screens in your dryer.
- Purchase energy-efficient appliances.

Sources: Monica Teague of Whirlpool, Dan Seligson of Partstore.com and CLR Cleaning Products

