

# Tips to Winterize Your Home

Protect your home and garden to withstand winter hardships.



Preparing your home for winter now will save you money later. Some jobs are simple maintenance, while others may require professional repairmen. Follow these tips to help protect your home from the winter chill.

- **Heating System Checks.** Before cold weather arrives, have a heating professional do a routine check on your heating system. Replace your air filters and keep them clean during the heating season. Taking these steps will ensure that your furnace is running efficiently and safely.
- **Chimney and Fireplace.** Check to be sure the chimney is free of any leaves, nests, birds or squirrels. Installing a screen or cap over the top will keep debris from getting inside. The flue damper should open and close easily. To make sure the chimney will draw up the fire and smoke, check the draft. To test this, roll up some newspaper and light it in the fireplace. The smoke should rise, if it doesn't you have an obstruction and should call a professional to clean the chimney.
- **Windows.** Install storm windows. Caulk and weatherstrip your windows to avoid any air leaks. Caulk should be applied in weather that is at least 45 degrees fahrenheit to avoid swelling with moisture and to make certain it sets properly.
- **Yard and Garden.** Begin by draining all hoses and sprinklers so they won't freeze or break. Protect your plants by cutting back, almost to the ground, any perennials whose foliage have become lifeless. Remove dead or dying tree limbs to avoid snow or ice build up which may cause branches to fall and damage your home.



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