

Home Maintenance Checklist

Is your Home ready for Winter?



Fourth Quarter 2017

Now is the time to take care of home repairs and regular maintenance before the weather conditions change drastically. Being pro-active is always less costly, and allows you to rest assured that your home is ready for the tough conditions that Winter can bring!

WINDOWS/DOORS

Check around all Windows, Doors and Patio Doors for:

- ☑ Foggy or moisture in between the glass in thermopane windows can indicate bad seals, causing heat loss and loss of energy.
- ☑ It may be necessary to remove old caulking and recaulk to provide a good seal.
- ☑ Consider replacing old single pane windows, with newer double pane, energy efficient windows in either wood or vinyl. If you have Storm Windows, are they weather tight, and closed tightly.
- ☑ Check around all doors for air leaks, ill-fitting frames, bad closures or locks, all can cause heat loss.



EXTERIOR INSPECTIONS

- ☑ Check wood siding and consider replacing boards in bad condition, even if it's too late in the season to have them painted - the new boards can be primed prior to installation and paint the wall or house in the Spring.
- ☑ Check masonry walls for splits and cracks in the mortar - repair by scraping out damaged joints as much as possible, and filling in with fresh mortar, smooth and shape to match existing.
- ☑ Check Vinyl Siding for cracks caused by rocks or pebbles flying up during mowing - consult a professional for repairs.
- ☑ Durable, Weather-stripping and proper seals on Dryer Vents, Outdoor faucets, Bath Vents as well as Windows & Doors.
- ☑ Schedule a Chimney cleaning, and check the exterior for leaks, add or replace chimney cap if necessary.



GUTTERS, DOWNSPOUTS & ICE DAMS

- ☑ A very important part of winter prep is cleaning Gutters & Downspouts before snow and ice arrive - and are allowed to build up on top of leaves and sticks, causing them to freeze, and clog. One way to clean them yourself is to use an old spatula cut to fit the inside of the gutter, and scoop the old leaves right out. **Most important is that downspouts** are cleared, to allow melting snow and ice to drain properly, rather than refreeze on cold nights, causing ice buildup - known as "ice dams".
- ☑ **Ice Dams** are caused when snow is allowed to build up on the roof, causing the "freeze/thaw effect"; either due to heat loss, or the sun, some melting occurs during the day, then when night sets in, any liquid refreezes. If gutters and downspouts have not been cleared, the liquid will not drain, and will refreeze, causing ice dams. Watch for a build up of snow on the roof; if possible try to remove about 3' of snow off the roof from the gutter line with a roof rake. Watch for icicles hanging from the gutters or eaves - a telltale sign of potential ice dams.



HEATING YOUR HOME

- ☑ Furnaces can vary in lifespan and quality. On average, a good furnace can last 17 - 20 years; it should be professionally serviced and cleaned every 2 years, and filters changed at least once a year, to maintain its efficiency.
- ☑ Consider installing a Programmable Thermostat - are you away from your home most of the day? Regulate the temperatures to your lifestyle and schedule, and save \$\$!
- ☑ Add glass doors to your fireplace; close the damper when not in use. Have the chimney cleaned.
- ☑ Check the insulation in your attic - if the house was built before 1980, the insulation probably isn't sufficient. Contact a professional to do an energy audit.
- ☑ Using blinds, shades or drapes efficiently can act as additional insulation and help keep out drafts - especially at night when temps are the coldest.

BE PROACTIVE: LOWER YOUR HEATING BILLS AND PROVIDE COMFORT & SAFETY FOR YOUR FAMILY THIS WINTER!

**CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR HOME PHONE: 630-584-2255
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www.remodelwithmcdowell.com**



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YOUR VEHICLE

Preparing your vehicles before Winter is so important... A few tips:

- ☑ Check tires; they should be properly inflated and full-tread.
- ☑ Put an emergency kit together for your trunk with a blanket, hand warmers, sand or salt, a fold-up shovel, jumper cables, etc.
- ☑ It's a good idea to replace windshield wipers before Winter
- ☑ Regular auto maintenance is important all year long, and especially before Winter - heating and defrost systems should be in good condition, check antifreeze fluid, & windshield washer solution

LANDSCAPING NEEDS ATTENTION TOO

- ☑ Rake and remove leaves from the lawn before snowfall; leaving a bed of leaves can inhibit Spring growth.
- ☑ Check the condition of bushes and shrubs for signs of disease, cover new vegetation from the harsh effects of ice melt on driveways and sidewalks.
- ☑ If indoor storage of patio and lawn furniture isn't available, investing in covers can extend the life of the furniture.
- ☑ Empty decorative pots and planters of soil, and store indoors, or cove and place in a protected area, such as under decks. Clay and molded plastic will crack with the freezing in Winter.
- ☑ Disconnect hoses and seal cracks around faucets.



CONDUCT AN ENERGY AUDIT

- ☑ Learning more about where there is heat loss in your home can save you hundreds of dollars on your heating bills. Contact a trained professional to assess your home before Winter and make a list of improvements that can be done to improve your homes' energy efficiency.
- ☑ Adding insulation to the attic, replacing old, or increasing weatherstripping around windows and doors, and upgrading to Energy Star appliances can all save you dollars.
- ☑ Find more information on www.energy.gov



HOUSECLEANING

- ☑ As activities turn indoors, and the Holidays arrive, along with potential houseguests, it is a good idea to tackle some of the more labor intensive indoor cleaning tasks ahead of time; take a day and deep clean the kitchen and bathrooms.
- ☑ Keep your kitchen looking great and working efficiently; Clean the oven; degrease the range hood and filter; vacuum refrigerator coils, clean light fixtures, wash the garbage can and recycling bins, clean small appliances, clean tile, grout and backsplash, wipe down wood cabinets, clean & freshen the garbage disposal.
- ☑ Deep clean the bathrooms; tile, grout and flooring, wipe down vanities, wash walls and check rarely used shower and tub valves.
- ☑ Provide new soaps and fresh towels, provide some toiletries for your guests conveniences.



STOCK UP ON WINTER SUPPLIES AND CHECK SAFETY DEVICES

- ☑ Check on the condition of snow shovels, ice scrapers. Stock up on ice melt, and/or sand.
- ☑ Have the snow blower serviced and have fuel on hand before any measurable snowfall.
- ☑ Test smoke detectors and carbon monoxide monitors. Check the fire extinguisher expiration date.
- ☑ Test outdoor electrical outlets, fuses and breakers before plugging in Holiday decorations.

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