

Fall Maintenance Tips

Preparing your home for winter is an important part of homeownership. Failure to do so can result in bigger issues come spring or result in failures at the worst times. Following routine maintenance can help assure you are not left without heat in Mid-January.

Tip #1: Seal exterior damage from pests

We aren't the only creatures seeking comfort from the cold in the winter. Animals like squirrels, mice, rats, and even bats will not hesitate to hibernate in the attic of your home if they can find a way in. Check the exterior for any possible entry points for rodents or pests: check and repair any damaged siding, vents, and chimney caps. Trim away branches overhanging the home or roof as this can create a pathway for rodents to access your home.

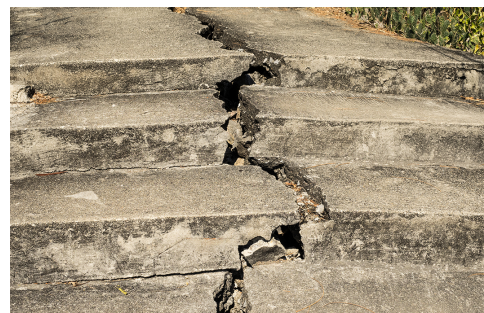


Tip #2: Clean out your gutters

Cleaning debris out of your gutters is a very important part of fall maintenance. Trapped leaves in your gutters can hold moisture directly against your home, potentially leading to a multitude of failures, including overflowing gutters, damaging the roof, and wood rot to the fascia and soffit. This will also prevent water from being properly directed away from the foundation of the home. This can lead to soil erosion causing the foundation to move or direct water into a crawl space or basement.

Tip #3: Ensure exterior walkway/railing safety

Risk of injury from slipping and falling is much higher in the winter. The risk of injury only goes up when walkway conditions are left unchecked. Damaged and uneven walkways may be concealed by snow or ice in the winter, and a wobbly railing won't help when slipping down icy stairs. Confirm that your exterior railings are properly secured and your exterior walkways and stairs are in good condition to minimize the risk of injury.



Tip #4: Check safety devices

Fall is the time to prepare for the winter cold. This is a good time to check the insulation levels within the attic and add more if needed. Look around entry doors for daylight, and replace weather stripping where daylight can be seen. Check around windows for cracking or deteriorated caulking. Caulk and seal windows to prevent heating and air loss. Sealing these areas will keep your home warmer and reduce your energy bills.

Fall Maintenance Tips: Continued

Tip #5: Schedule heating system maintenance

We spend more time in our homes during the winter months. The last thing you want to happen during the winter is a heating system failure. Not only can this be a terrible inconvenience, but maintenance can be much more expensive during peak season. Ensure your home will remain warm during winter months by verifying your heating system is in full working condition before it is too late. If you have a vented gas fireplace check your vents for obstructions. For vent free types operate with the windows open to burn off any collected dust. Chimneys for wood-burning fireplaces should be swept yearly to prevent creosote buildup. This is also a great time to check your smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers to ensure safety.



Additional Tips

- ❖ Irrigation: Drain irrigation system to prevent freezing.
- ❖ Hoses: Turn off exterior hose faucets to prevent pipes from freezing.
- ❖ Dryer Vent: Check to make sure dryer vent is not clogged and is venting properly
- ❖ Patio: Cover outdoor furniture to prevent wear.
- ❖ Lawn Equipment: Winterize lawnmowers and other lawn care devices with fuel stabilizer.
- ❖ Lawn: Rake and remove leaves from the grass to ensure healthy growth in the spring.
- ❖ Furnace Filters: Change out your furnace filter. Check your owner's manual to see how often your furnace filter needs to be changed.

