



Fall Maintenance Tips

It's that time of year again. The days are getting shorter and cooler. To ensure that your house remains in prime condition over the winter, a few hours of preventative maintenance is required. By making a thorough inspection of your home inside and out once a season you can detect and repair problems before they become issues. This can save you time and costly headaches down the road.

GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Clean gutters and downspouts frequently throughout fall to prevent build up of leaves and other debris. Neglected gutters can lead to ice damming, wood rot problems, pest infestations, wet basements, foundation damage and many other expensive complications.

Be sure water is not coming down behind gutters and that all support brackets are securely in place. Check to ensure water drains at least 6' from the foundation and not on top of driveways or walkways.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Check around the window frames inside and out for potential leaks. Caulk any visible gaps.

Inspect and repair any loose or damaged window locks, latches or door frames.

Check around all exterior doors for gaps. If it's sunny look for daylight around the door. A bright shining around the exterior frame will also work. Install weather stripping to prevent drafts and lower heating bills.

If you have older windows check around those for gaps and weather strip as needed.

HEATING SYSTEMS

Do you remember the last time your furnace was serviced? Most people don't and neglected furnaces lose efficiency and may fail. Consider having a heating professional check your heating system to ensure optimal performance and discover minor problems before they turn into costly major repairs.

Replace the filter in your furnace on a regular basis. This is the #1 cause of cracked heat exchangers.

Check for leaks around the duct joints. Home inspectors frequently find disconnected ducts that are blowing warm air into crawlspaces or attics.

PLUMBING

If you have any faucets that produce icy cold water in the winter, these pipes may be in danger of freezing.

Consider having these pipes insulated to protect them.

Disconnect all garden hoses. Even frost-free spigots will freeze if the garden hose holds water in the pipe.

CHIMNEY AND FIREPLACE

If you use your wood fireplace on a regular basis, it should be inspected and cleaned on a yearly basis by a Certified Chimney Sweep. If you have a gas fireplace with ceramic logs, it should be serviced if you see soot on the logs or the glass. Make sure the Chimney Sweep is certified through www.csia.org.

GENERAL HOME TIPS

Make sure you have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors installed on every living level of the home. Change the batteries in all the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Clean dryer vents, exhaust fans and vents in the bathrooms and kitchen. When cleaning the dryer vents, make sure to clean your lint trap off with soapy water. Lint can build up on this that blocks airflow making your dryer run much longer to dry your clothes. Don't believe me, run water over your lint trap and see if it holds water like a bowl. Surprise!

Change all the household filters, including water filters and the filter in your AC/heating units.

Trim all bushes and trees away from your home. The canopy of the tree reflects the distance the tree's root system has grown. The outer limits of the tree canopy should be at least 6 feet out from the foundation wall. Bushes should be at least 6" from the foundation.