

Wintercity YXE

How to Prepare Your Home for Winter

It's that time of year again, the leaves are turning colour and there is a coolness in the air. Preparing your home for winter, whether that be a house (and yard), apartment or basement suite is important. Here are some tips on how to prepare your home for winter.

- **Check your roof:** Scan your roof for damaged, loose, or missing shingles that could leak during winter storms or when the snow starts to melt in spring. Look for cracks in the flashing seals around vent stacks and chimneys too. You may choose to do the repairs yourself or hire a contractor. If you rent, talk to your landlord first.
- **Check your heating system:** If you live in a house, you or your landlord may want to have your system inspected by a technician to ensure your furnace is clean, in good repair and is running as efficiently as possible. It's also a good idea to change your filters before the weather gets cold.



- **Caulk around windows and doors:** If you feel cold air entering from windows and/or doors that are closed, check for a gap between the siding and windows or door frames. Is it wider than a nickel? If so, you need to reapply silicone caulk. You may also want to add weatherstripping around doors, to block out any daylight shining through the cracks. If you rent, talk to your landlord before making improvements.

- Clean the gutters: If your gutters are full of leaves and other debris, water can back up and run down the exterior of your home, causing damage to siding and wood trim. A ridge of ice could also form, which can cause meltwater to back up and flow into your home. If you're a homeowner, clean out your gutters and make sure the gutters and fascia are in good form, or repair them if not.



- Clean the chimney and order firewood: It's a good idea to have your chimney and vents cleaned and inspected before you start enjoying a warm fire. This will prevent unplanned fires and carbon monoxide from getting into your home. You may also want to stock up on firewood and find a sheltered or covered area to store it for the winter.



- Test the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: House and apartment fires are most common in winter. Check your detectors and make sure they have fully charged batteries. If you get a HVAC inspection, they will check to make sure your furnace and water heater are vented properly, which is the most common source of carbon monoxide. If you don't have a carbon monoxide detector, it's highly recommended you install one.
- Cover your patio furniture: Cover your furniture, or if you have storage options (i.e., shed, garage or basement) store it for the winter. Protecting your furniture from the elements will give it a longer shelf life.
- Prepare for snow removal: Reviewing your shovel and salt inventory is a good idea. If you own a snowblower, start it up and ensure it runs before the first snowstorm of the winter hits. If not, get it repaired sooner rather than later.



If you're a homeowner and have a yard, here are some additional tips:

- Drain your sprinkler system and turn off outside faucets: Your sprinkler system lines need to be blown out before it freezes, otherwise the lines could bust. Your outside faucets should be drained as well. To drain your faucets, simply turn off the water valve inside your home and then turn the faucet on outside until the water remaining in the line is drained. If left undrained, the faucet will freeze in the winter which could cause your water line to split inside your home, flooding your basement.
- Prepare your lawn for winter: Late September is a great time to aerate your lawn and overseed it, and then in late October apply fertilizer with winterizer. This will help with new grass growth, which typically occurs when it's not too hot or too cold, so September and October and April and May are ideal months.
- Trim tree limbs: Check your trees and trim any dead tree limbs to avoid them from falling or causing damage to your home during a winter storm.



- Prep your lawn and yard care equipment: Make sure to drain the gas from your lawnmower, weed wacker, etc. before storing for the winter. Gas goes bad and can clog up fuel filters and cause your equipment to run poorly. If you have a pressure washer, be sure to winterize it according to the manual.
- Seal exterior concrete and asphalt surfaces: If you have a concrete driveway, patio or walkway make sure they are protected by applying a sealer to the surfaces. Inspect your concrete surfaces and fill any cracks before applying the sealer. That way water can't get in and freeze during the winter.



- Check your drainage: Make sure water isn't pooling by your foundation. If there are low spots, fill them in with soil. Add extensions to downspouts so that water runs at least 3 to 4 feet away from your foundation. Water buildup around a foundation can cause problems as it freezes and thaws during the winter months.

