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## Things You Must Do to Your Home before Winter Hits

With winter looming, there are plenty of things to do to prepare your home. From taking care of your roof and gutters to getting the windows and doors sealed to getting your heating system in prime condition, you'll be a busy bee. Please check out our Must Do's before Winter

### **Things You Must Do to Your Home before Winter Hits**

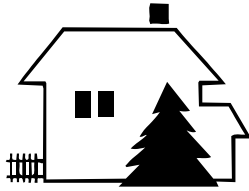
As a homeowner, you probably know that there are a handful of maintenance tasks you need to complete as you prepare for the harsh, winter conditions. But you may not have a carefully crafted and comprehensive list of tasks. And that's okay because that's what we're here for. Whether you're making your list or want to compare your own against ours, here's what we consider the essential must do's for the home before winter hits.

**Conduct a Roof Inspection-**A professional roof inspection can identify roof damage while it still costs hundreds, instead of thousands, of dollars to fix. This inspection should also tell you the condition of your attic ventilation, key in preventing the formation of destructive ice dams. If you simply can't come up with the \$200-\$300 fee, at the very least conduct your own visual inspection to look for signs of wear-and-tear.

**Clean your Gutters-**Probably the most common and least neglected task of the bunch, don't take your gutter cleaning for granted. Proper cleaning involves more than just throwing easy-to-reach leaves out of the channel. Flush your downspouts and keep an eye out for any signs of gutter deterioration.

**Insulate and Seal Windows-**If you don't already have double-pane windows, it's time to jump on the bandwagon. With heating costs, few home improvements pay for themselves as quickly as replacement windows. If you simply can't afford it, use thick plastic covers or blankets to help out in the meantime. And regardless of the number of panes, take a look at your window frame. It may need new sealant.

**Seal and Inspect Doors-**Some homeowners pay so much attention to their windows that they forget their doors. Take a look at your entry door for air leaks and use weather stripping to help seal the joints. Take a look at your garage door, too, for both insulation and home security value.



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**Evaluate the Furnace/Heating System-**This one has a ton of upside. Catching problems with your heating system before winter hits almost always saves a bunch of money and will give you some time to plan for a replacement system, if necessary. If nothing else, at least change the filter, no matter the age or condition of your system.

**Inspect your Water Heater-**This little forgotten appliance can cause Great damage if not inspected yearly for drips and leaks. Back flushing in one degree of maintenance, keeping track of the type of water heater you have installed, 20yr, 35 yrs 50 yr? is another, don't wait to replace your Water Heater if it has reached its Max useful life.

**Winterize Your Landscaping-**Just because you'll be spending most of the winter indoors doesn't mean all your maintenance is on the home itself. Properly close your swimming pool, winterize your sprinkler system (Drain), and prepare your garden for next year's planting.

**Miscellaneous and Emergency Preparation-**For most homes, winter means the looming possibility of snow and/or ice storms. A back-up generator is a great idea, but still no substitute for an emergency kit, complete with food and water, a reliable radio, and first-aid kit. Investing in a snow blower isn't a bad idea, either, especially for older homeowners who are vulnerable to heart problems. Don't worry about saving the planet, until you've first saved yourself and your loved ones. Still, a back-up generator will, among other things, help make sure plumbing lines don't freeze and burst. After all, burst pipes harm both your household and your local environment.