

FALL HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

How to use: Start outside and work from the roofline down, then move indoors. Complete the checklist over two or three weekends rather than trying to do everything at once.

1. ROOF, GUTTERS & DRAINAGE

☐ **Check the roof from the ground**

Look for missing shingles, lifted edges, dark patches, sagging areas or debris in roof valleys. Avoid climbing a steep, wet or frosty roof.

☐ **Clean leaves out of gutters**

Packed leaves can force water over the edge and contribute to fascia damage or basement moisture.

☐ **Flush downspouts**

Run water through each downspout and clear any blockage.

☐ **Extend downspouts away from the foundation**

Discharge water several feet away. Use extensions or splash blocks and keep runoff off walkways when possible.

☐ **Inspect roof flashing**

Check around chimneys, skylights, plumbing vents and roof-to-wall intersections.

☐ **Trim branches near the roof**

Remove branches that scrape shingles, hang over gutters or could become hazardous under snow and ice.

Remember: The best time to solve a roof drainage issue is before water turns to ice.

2. WINDOWS, DOORS & EXTERIOR GAPS

☐ **Walk the exterior slowly**

Look for gaps around window trim, door frames, hose bibs, vents, utility penetrations and siding joints.

☐ **Refresh cracked caulk**

Remove loose material first, then use exterior-rated caulk around openings where cold air or wind-driven rain can enter.

☐ **Replace worn weatherstripping**

Check exterior doors, the attached-garage door and sliding patio doors. Daylight around a closed door means air is getting in.

☐ **Add door sweeps where needed**

A worn bottom seal can allow cold air, moisture, pests and road salt residue inside.

☐ **Check basement windows**

Make sure they close tightly and window wells are clear of leaves.

☐ **Inspect exterior paint and exposed wood**

Touch up bare or peeling areas on trim, fascia and window sills before snow and ice arrive.

☐ **Remove window A/C units**

Remove them when possible and close the window fully; otherwise seal around the unit tightly.

3. HEATING, FIREPLACE & INDOOR AIR

☐ **Replace the furnace filter**

Use the correct size and install it with the airflow arrow pointing in the proper direction.



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☐ **Test the furnace before you need it**

Run the heat. Listen for unusual noises, check warm-air delivery and confirm the thermostat responds.

☐ **Clear space around the furnace**

Keep boxes, storage, paint and cleaning supplies away from HVAC equipment.

☐ **Check vents and returns**

Move rugs, furniture and curtains that block airflow.

☐ **Inspect whole-home humidifiers**

Replace the pad or check the water panel if needed.

☐ **Schedule heating service if the system struggles**

Uneven heat, short-cycling or a gas smell requires qualified professional attention.

☐ **Schedule chimney cleaning if you burn wood**

Have the chimney professionally inspected and cleaned before regular winter use.

☐ **Open and close the fireplace damper**

Make sure it moves freely and seals when closed.

☐ **Check fireplace screens or doors**

Replace damaged screens and clean glass doors.

☐ **Store firewood properly**

Keep wood off the ground and away from siding; do not stack it directly against the house.

4. PLUMBING & FREEZE PROTECTION

☐ **Disconnect garden hoses**

Remove every hose from outdoor faucets before freezing weather.

☐ **Shut off exterior water lines**

Close interior shutoff valves when available, then open the outdoor faucet to drain remaining water.

☐ **Cover exterior faucets**

Use foam faucet covers as an added layer of insulation.

☐ **Drain irrigation systems**

Schedule a sprinkler blowout before freezing temperatures become consistent.

☐ **Insulate exposed pipes**

Pay special attention to garages, crawl spaces and utility rooms.

☐ **Know the main water shutoff location**

Make sure everyone in the home knows where it is and label it if necessary.

☐ **Check under sinks on exterior walls**

During very cold weather, open cabinet doors to allow warm air to reach vulnerable pipes.

5. YARD, LANDSCAPE & EXTERIOR SURFACES

☐ **Rake or mulch heavy leaf cover**

Thick leaf mats can smother grass and trap moisture.

☐ **Clear leaves from window wells**

Keep drainage paths open around basement windows.



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☐ **Cut back dead perennials**

Remove weak stems and debris near the foundation; keep plant material from touching siding.

☐ **Protect young trees and shrubs**

Use burlap or wraps where winter wind, salt spray or animal damage is a concern.

☐ **Store patio cushions and umbrellas**

Clean and dry them first to help prevent mildew.

☐ **Cover or store outdoor furniture**

Secure covers against winter winds.

6. DRIVEWAY, WALKWAY & GARAGE

☐ **Seal cracks in concrete or asphalt**

Water can enter cracks, freeze, expand and worsen damage during freeze-thaw cycles.

☐ **Check steps and railings**

Tighten loose handrails and repair uneven steps before ice arrives.

☐ **Stock winter supplies**

Keep snow shovels, pet-safe ice melt if needed, scraper tools and gloves accessible.

☐ **Service the snow blower**

Test it before the first storm; check fuel, oil, spark plug, belts and tire pressure if applicable.

☐ **Move summer tools to storage**

Put away hoses, planters, lawn tools and garden décor before snow hides them.

☐ **Organize the garage entry**

Use a mat for wet boots and a tray for snowmelt to protect interior floors.

7. SAFETY DEVICES & EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

☐ **Test smoke alarms**

Press the test button, replace batteries if needed and follow the manufacturer's replacement guidance.

☐ **Test carbon monoxide alarms**

Place alarms near sleeping areas and follow local code and manufacturer guidance.

☐ **Review generator safety**

Never operate a generator in a garage, basement or enclosed space. Keep it outdoors and away from windows and doors.

☐ **Build a simple winter emergency kit**

Include flashlights, batteries, blankets, basic first aid supplies, bottled water, shelf-stable food and phone-charging options.

☐ **Check exterior lighting**

Replace burned-out bulbs near doors, walkways, driveways and garages.

☐ **Make house numbers visible**

Ensure snow, branches and poor lighting will not hide the address.



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YOUR 3-WEEKEND FALL PLAN

WEEKEND ONE — OUTSIDE

- ☐ Clean gutters and downspouts
- ☐ Disconnect hoses and winterize outdoor faucets
- ☐ Clear leaves from window wells
- ☐ Inspect roof, siding, trim and foundation
- ☐ Store patio items and garden tools

WEEKEND TWO — INSIDE

- ☐ Replace the furnace filter
- ☐ Test the heating system
- ☐ Check smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- ☐ Seal drafts around doors and windows
- ☐ Find and label the main water shutoff

WEEKEND THREE — REPAIRS & PREPARATION

- ☐ Seal driveway and walkway cracks
- ☐ Touch up exterior paint
- ☐ Schedule roof, chimney, HVAC or plumbing help
- ☐ Service the snow blower



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WHEN TO CALL A PROFESSIONAL

☐ Roof damage you cannot safely inspect

Steep roofs, wet shingles and second-story gutters are not worth the risk.

☐ Water stains on ceilings or walls

Stains can indicate an active or recurring leak.

☐ Repeated basement moisture

Possible causes include grading, gutters, window wells, sump pumps or foundation cracks.

☐ Furnace problems

Strange noises, gas smells, short cycling or weak airflow require qualified service.

☐ Large tree limbs near the house

Heavy branches over roofs, garages or power lines should be handled by trained crews.

☐ Chimney concerns

Cracks, loose bricks, damaged caps or heavy soot buildup should be inspected before regular use.

Fall Maintenance Notes:



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