



# FALL PREP CHECKLIST



As sad as we are to see it go, summer is on it's way out. Winter is soon approaching, and it is best to prepare now so you aren't stuck in the cold doing maintenance, or saddled with an expensive bill when damage is uncovered during the thaw. Follow these tips for peace of mind.

## INTERIOR

- Inspect** windows and doors for leaks and add weather stripping as required. Your heating bill can be lowered by nearly 10% by making sure things are air tight.
- Organize** the entryway. Keep mittens, scarves, and hats in baskets for easy access and allow plenty of floor space for boots. Protect your floors from water damage with a door mat and rugs.
- Reduce** static by cleaning your humidifier and getting it ready to perform during the dry winter months. Slightly moist air is not only good for your health, it is also good for the wood in your home (prevents it from cracking). Vinegar is inexpensive and works well to clean the water holding compartments.
- Inspect** your furnace. Have it serviced by a professional if you feel unsure, and be sure to clean or replace dirty furnace filters for optimum performance. If you use firewood as a heating source, now is the time to bulk up your supply.
- Check** the safety of your home. October is fire prevention month, and is a good reminder to replace the batteries in the smoke and CO2 alarms throughout your house. Be sure to make sure your fire extinguishers are not expired. Check the fireplace to be sure it is venting properly and consider having the chimney professionally swept. Be sure that your family creates and practices an emergency fire escape plan.

## EXTERIOR

- Clean** the gutters. You want to be sure to do this annually, even though it is a pesky chore. If you leave your gutters clogged, water may be trapped and freeze, which could cause much larger problems. While you are up on the ladder, go ahead and do a quick check of your roof for damaged shingles, flashing, or vents.
- Prep** the windows. If you live in an older home, now is the time to remove the screens and install the storm coverings. It's also an opportune time to give the glass a good cleaning, to let in more sunshine during the shorter winter days.
- Store** your hoses, and be sure to drain any outdoor faucets and sprinkler systems. A burst water pipe can be both expensive and time consuming to clean up. If time and budget allows, consider replacing an existing hose faucet with a freeze proof faucet - and put your mind at ease.
- Maintain** your sidewalks. Checking for cracks in your walkways and driveway can prevent water from seeping in and freezing, which could make those small cracks larger. If you see that things have gotten really bad, take the time to resurface the worn concrete.
- Light** the way. Shorter days are approaching! Consider installing solar lights along your sidewalk, or a floodlight on the garage. Check existing exterior light bulbs to be sure they are in working order.
- Clean** and store outdoor furniture. Putting them in a dry and warm spot during the winter months means that they will last longer and can be enjoyed during the summer months for years to come.
- Tidy** the garage. All summer long it has served as a revolving door for yard tools and play things. Now's the time to bring it back to storage headquarters. While you're at it, give that the snow blower a maintenance check and fill it with fuel so that it's all ready to roll when the white stuff starts coming down!
- Prepare** the flower beds by planting bulbs of spring bloomers. After the deep freeze, you will be happy to see this colorful sign of approaching warm weather. Make sure to plant them in a spot of your yard that receives full daytime sun.

