

Fall Home Maintenance Checklist

A fall home maintenance checklist of autumn tasks that prepare your home for winter.

Heating & HVAC

- Schedule a professional furnace or heat-pump tune-up
- Replace the furnace filter and stock spares for the season
Check 1-inch filters monthly through heating season
- Test the heating system on a cool day before you need it
- Bleed radiators or check boiler pressure on hydronic systems
- Reverse ceiling fans to clockwise to circulate warm air down
- Confirm the thermostat works and replace its batteries

Gutters, Roof & Exterior

- Clean gutters and downspouts after most leaves have fallen
- Inspect the roof from the ground for loose or missing shingles
- Check flashing and seals around chimneys, vents and skylights
- Confirm downspouts direct water at least three feet from the foundation
- Rake leaves away from the foundation and clear window wells
- Trim dead branches that could fall under snow or ice load

Plumbing & Water

- Drain and shut off outdoor faucets and sprinkler systems
- Disconnect, drain and store garden hoses
- Insulate exposed pipes in unheated areas like the garage and crawl space
- Test the sump pump before winter storms and snowmelt
- Locate the main water shut-off in case a pipe bursts

Seal & Weatherproof

- Apply weatherstripping to doors and seal drafty windows
- Caulk gaps and cracks where pipes and wires enter the house
- Check attic insulation depth and add more if it's thin
- Install draft stoppers under exterior doors
- Inspect and reverse or remove window AC units

Fireplace & Safety

- Hire a certified chimney sweep before lighting the first fire
- Test smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms and replace old batteries
CO risk rises in fall and winter with fuel-burning heat
- Check the fireplace damper opens and closes fully
- Inspect and recharge the kitchen fire extinguisher
- Stock firewood in a dry, covered spot away from the house

Yard & Outdoor Prep

- Aerate, fertilize and overseed the lawn before frost
- Clean and store outdoor furniture, grills and tools

- Service and store the lawn mower; ready the snow blower
- Stock up on ice melt and check that snow shovels are usable
- Empty and store pots; protect tender plants from frost