

YEARLY MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

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# A HANDY CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR HOME ALL YEAR LONG





TO PREVENT THE  
NEED FOR BIG  
REPAIRS DOWN THE  
LINE, YOUR HOME  
NEEDS SOME  
LOVING CARE ALL  
YEAR LONG.

You don't have to do every one of these tasks every year, but you want to take the time to create a maintenance schedule for both the inside and outside of your home.

This checklist will help keep you organized so you don't forget what needs to be done and when to do it. Use it as a reference guide so you know what to focus on each season.

I'M HERE TO HELP YOU TAKE CARE  
OF YOUR HOME, EVEN IF YOU AREN'T  
SELLING ANYTIME SOON.

Some items are simple DIY tasks and others may require a professional. I have a great list of contractors who can help, so if you get to an item that you don't want to tackle yourself, reach out to me for my recommendations. I'm still here for you to help make sure you take good care of your home, even if you aren't buying or selling anytime soon.

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# SPRING

THE PERFECT TIME TO CATCH UP ON YOUR HOME'S  
MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE, ESPECIALLY EXTERIOR ITEMS

DON'T NEGLECT THE TASKS THAT WILL PROTECT YOUR  
HOME ALL YEAR LONG!

# SPRING

Taking care of some must-do tasks in early spring will allow you to fully enjoy your home and yard once some gorgeous days come our way. The warmer weather can make it a perfect time to get some projects done you've been putting off during the winter months.

## KEEPING IT COOL

Get your AC up and running properly so you can keep your home cool before the days get hot.

- Central AC Unit.** Schedule your central AC unit serviced now by HVAC professional. A yearly tune-up will keep it running. Keep this unit, which is located outside, clean, and free of leaves and debris. Trim any shrubs away from the unit since it needs circulation space.
- AC Units.** Set up your window unit or wall unit. Make sure you clean it once a month when using it - vacuum dust and dirt around it to prevent clogging, and change the filter. Remember to cover your window unit if you don't remove it after the season.

## RAIN, RAIN GO AWAY!

Make sure your home and yard is ready for any downpours and wet weather.

- Doorways.** Make sure you've got inside and outside door mats for wiping wet shoes. Switch them to a fun spring pattern if you have ones from winter. Get an umbrella stand or tub for easy in-and-out access.
- Gutters.** Double-check your home's gutters, French drain system, or downspouts to make sure they are without debris and clog-free. You want the water to move away from your home's foundation. Fix any broken or loose gutters from winter storms — rainwater that pools can really damage roofs, ceilings, attics, and walls!
- Drainage.** Observe your lawn during a rainstorm so you're ready to address any drainage issues. Hire a contractor/landscaper to examine any problems with standing water or lack of adequate draining. You'll have a better idea of the cause and consequences (basement flooding) of poor drainage. Proper grading, a French drain system, or curtain drain may be needed. If your entire street has problems, you can always address city hall if it's a municipal issue.

# SPRING

## TIME TO SPARKLE AND SHINE

Let the sun shine in and clean your home from top to bottom. Tackle a few of these tasks each cleaning period so you don't overwhelm yourself. Remember to always follow your manufacturer's cleaning instructions for any items.

- Windows.** Wash windows, wipe down sills, and clean screens by vacuuming first and then rinsing with a hose outside. Some of you may want to wait until the yellow pollen season is over to do this or you may need to repeat it again.
- Floors.** Wash and polish those hardwood floors after the beating they got from winter boots and wet paws.
- Carpets.** Hire a professional or rent a rug cleaner from a local business to clean your carpets thoroughly. This is a good idea if you have pets.
- Tile.** Clean yucky tile grout to make your bathrooms and kitchens shine. If you have ceramic tile, the grout can start to look dirty and stained. An old toothbrush and some vinegar and baking soda are a good start. You can reseal the grout or stain it with new color too. For tiles, give them a deeper clean than usual and reseal if needed.
- Countertops.** You wanted those granite counters when you bought your home. Now's a good time to clean and reseal them if necessary.
- Electronics.** Wipe down all of your electronic devices – TV, computer screens, printers, keyboards, etc. Use LCD or microfiber cloths to rub away fingerprints and dust. Look for an electronic recycle center to bring your unused cell phones, printers, monitors etc.
- Vents.** Have you ever cleaned your bathroom vents? Take off the cover, clean it with soap and water. Vacuum any dust in nooks and crannies too. Consider having your HVAC ducts professionally cleaned.
- Chimney/Fireplace.** Clean up ashes after your last fire of the season and close the damper to prevent rainwater, animals, and drafts to enter your home.
- Washer/Dryer.** Run the cleaning cycle with bleach if you have an HD washer to cut down on mold and mildew smells. Don't forget to regularly vacuum out the lint from the dryer vent and hose to avoid a fire. And get your dryer vent hose professionally cleaned too since build-up could cause a fire.

# SPRING

## TIME TO SPARKLE AND SHINE

Continued.

- Kitchen.** Actually, use your oven's handy self-cleaning feature to remove food drips and spills. Clean your old-school coffee maker with vinegar so your next cup is truly fresh. Go through your cabinets and organize your cans, cartons, and items.
- Bathroom.** Have you ever cleaned the showerhead in your bathroom? If it is spraying unevenly because it is covered with mineral deposits, now is the time for this simple task. Fill a plastic bag with white vinegar and attached it to the showerhead with a rubber band. Wait an hour and turn on the water. Voila!
- Refrigerator.** Give your refrigerator a good wipe-down inside before your next big shopping trip. Don't forget to change your refrigerator filter if you have an ice cube and water dispenser so you'll get fresh-tasting glasses of water. Vacuum behind your refrigerator and its coils too.
- Paint.** It's a perfect time to pick a bright new color to spark up a room.
- Flowers.** Go find one of your vases stashed away and get some cut flowers. You'll bring the feeling of spring inside your home in an easy, inexpensive way!

## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Give your yard and exterior of your home a good examination to see how everything looks and for any winter damage.

- Cleanup.** Take the time to remove debris such as dead foliage and fallen branches and twigs that may be scattered in your yard. Clear out any growth or brush you don't want.
- Garden Supplies.** Get your garden tools and supplies cleaned, sharpened, and restocked. Remove rust and seal blades for pruning shears, hedge clippers, trowels, etc. Clean and restock garden pots, gloves, knee pads, watering cans. Don't forget to get gas for your lawnmower. Purge and organize your garden shed to get rid of what you don't need or use anymore and then arrange the space for easy access and a more orderly set up.

# SPRING

## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Continued.

- Patio.** Clean and prepare your patio or deck and any outdoor furniture or planters. Consider power washing to get rid of grime on some items that can withstand the pressure. Depends on what material you may have – pavers, concrete, slate, etc. Give everything a good deep cleaning so the rest of the year, you can do a periodic wipe down.
- Grill.** Get your grill cleaned and repaired now. Scrub the grates with liquid cleaner, and wash the burners and covers if you have them. Don't forget to get the tank filled if you have a gas grill or stock up on charcoal for other grills.
- Pests.** Little critters start to come out in the warmer weather so hire a pest service that can help you deal with ants, rats, spiders, or mice. Make sure your garbage is securely closed, and clean up any areas with debris that create an inviting home for critters.
- Driveway.** Winter weather can be harsh on driveways and sidewalks. Repair cracks whether you have concrete or asphalt. Sealing or resurfacing can give a driveway a bright lift. If you have pavers, make sure you know how to clean and re-sand or hire a professional.
- Flower garden.** You can begin to plant summer bulbs, annuals, and perennials for beds and planters. Come up with a plan so you purchase only what you need and what works for the soil and sunlight in your yard. Put some mulch down so your yard will look "clean and crisp."
- Trees and shrubs.** Once growth or buds sprouts, you can fertilize and prune certain plants. You can transplant trees before they leaf out. Prune trees and shrubs that have any damage from the winter. You can't prune azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons until after they bloom. You can prune non-flowering trees and shrubs.

# SUMMER

MAKE SURE YOUR HOME AND YARD CAN HANDLE THE  
SUMMERTIME HEAT AND HUMIDITY.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO DO SO YOU ENJOY THE  
SUNNY DAYS AHEAD!



# SUMMER

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## KEEP IT COOL

It's hot outside and you don't want that heat inside. It's not too late to keep your rooms cool and delightful even on 100 degree days!

- Get your A/C system serviced professionally.** If you didn't take care of this item in the Spring, here's a friendly reminder :) If you haven't had your A/C checked out yet then don't delay any longer. Even if your system is relatively new, you want to get your heating and cooling system maintained at the change of seasons. This preventative service can help you can avoid any emergency problems.
- Sign up for a yearly maintenance contract with an HVAC company.** Having a service contract with a cooling and heating company means that they will reach out to you before the change of every season. That way your system will get serviced at the appropriate time. Plus, if you do have any emergencies in the middle of the season, your service call will be a priority and move to the top of their list. Email your agent here at Dwell Residential for our list of recommendations.
- Clear away debris around your outside air conditioning unit.** Make sure you don't have shrubs, weeds, or other growth too close to your unit. You want it to work properly and be as efficient as possible.
- Clean and replace your unit's air filters.** Don't forget to do this and stick to your manufacturer's recommendations. Your A/C unit will be working in overdrive to keep you cool, so do your part to make it work effectively. You can order air filters online to keep it simple and easy.
- Go shopping for portable or window A/C units (or even fans).** Not every home has central A/C, or maybe some of your rooms are more stifling than others. You might be surprised to see how many more (and improved) options are out there to help keep your home cool over the summer... oscillating fans, ceiling fans, attic fans, window A/C units, and portable A/C ones. And many are more energy-efficient and less noisy!

# SUMMER

## PREVENT MOISTURE AND MOLD

Summer means higher levels of humidity. This excess moisture in the air causes mold and mildew. High humidity levels can wreak havoc on your home and stuff. It can warp wood and cause condensation on walls. Plus, it damages your electronics, pianos, books, clothing and more.

- Check your basement.** Basements can become musty and moist, especially on humid days. If you have a basement or live in a lower level condo, now is the time to tackle this problem before it gets out of hand. No one wants to deal with health concerns from mold or have ruined items.
- Get a dehumidifier to remove moisture.** Make sure you buy the right dehumidifier and the correct size for the room. You can adjust humidity levels to better draw the moisture out. You'll find ones that come with a bin that you have to empty or you can connect a tube to a drain so it empties continuously. Whatever you do, don't buy one that will overflow if you forget to empty it! Keep in mind dehumidifiers vary according to how many pints of moisture they can remove in 24 hours.
- Manage your indoor humidity levels for summer.** Try to reduce the humidity levels to 40-50% at most. Your programmable thermostat may indicate your home's relative humidity. There are several lifestyle changes and solutions that you can do to help with humidity levels.
- Ventilate in high moisture areas in your home.** Make sure that bathrooms or kitchens have vent fans or at the very least, an open window. (Don't take long hot showers!) Consider getting a home ventilation or humidification system if you don't have one so you can set appropriate levels for your home in summer and winter. Run the A/C when you can to curb moisture. And if you have a crawl space, make sure to insulate it with a plastic vapor barrier and install vents.
- Help prevent mold in your home.** Too much moisture in the air is a health concern and can worsen your allergies and asthma. Mold is dangerous and having a dehumidifier running continuously can help reduce your home and basement's moisture. Again, make sure you check humidity levels in your home and maintain proper levels. If you think you have a mold problem - it even can happen behind walls or under carpets - contact a professional. You definitely want to avoid major health issues for your family.

# SUMMER

## SUMMERTIME CHIMNEY WORK

Believe it or not, the summer can be a great time to get your chimney and fireplace swept or to have any other work done on the inside or outside. Since the busy time for chimney companies tends to be in the fall, you might be able to negotiate a great discount now. Give it a shot!

## YARD WORK FOR SUMMER DAYS

Your yard should be in pretty good shape by summer but the heat can take a toll on your lawn, trees, flower beds, and pots.

- Have your trees trimmed ... period.** Summer storms and trees full of leaves with unstable branches can only bring disaster. No one wants a tree to crash through their home or hit their car. Call today to make that appointment if you haven't done it for a couple of years. Better yet, have a tree service come out regularly to ensure your trees are healthy and not diseased.
- Check on exterior drainage systems and consider improvements.** Summer means big thunderstorms due to the heat. To prevent costly water damage to your home now is the time to make sure all of your drainage systems are operating properly and that they move water away from your home. Consider getting downspout extenders for gutters, having your landscaping slope away from your home's foundation, or installing storm drains in your yard or even a French drain system.
- Remove leaves and debris from all area drains, gutters, and window wells.** Again, preventative maintenance when it comes to water overflow damage. Prevent this from happening by monitoring and continuing to clean up around your home.
- Add a splash of color with some annuals that can withstand the summer heat.** As you enjoy your yard, patio or deck this season, bring some color to your surroundings. Work with your local garden center to see what will thrive best in your yard, especially if you have direct sunlight or if you want more low-maintenance plants.

# SUMMER

## YARD WORK FOR SUMMER DAYS

Continued.

- Keep Watering.** As the temperature rises throughout the summer, keep watering your lawn, plant beds, and containers. Don't water in the middle of the day with the hot sun, but do it in the early evening when it starts to cool down. And if you head out of town, don't forget to ask a neighbor to continue to water as necessary.
- Clean, power wash or stain/seal your deck and patio.** It's still a good time to get your deck and patio power washed or cleaned. Brighten them up and make them sparkle for your summer entertaining. It's also a good time to protect them with new stain or sealant. And, don't forget about having your home's siding power washed or cleaned, depending on what the manufacture recommends.

## KEEP MOSQUITOES (AND OTHER PESTS) AT BAY

It's good to be vigilant when it comes to mosquitoes, ticks, rats, and other summertime pests. Make it a standard practice for your yard, and continue to monitor and adjust during the summer months.

- Keep mosquitoes from breeding in your yard.** Mosquitoes love standing water - any amount! So do your part to cut down on places where they can breed. Double-check for standing water in your yard and any outside containers - such as wheelbarrows, flower pots, buckets, watering cans, garbage cans, kids' toys. Even the little bit in your gutter drain can lead to breeding. Store items in your garage and shed as much as possible.
- Be proactive about mosquitos - both larvae and adults.** Take protective measures for mosquito control to prevent larvae from flourishing. Look into non-toxic solutions such as nonchemical larvicides (Mosquito Dunks for larvae; Mosquito Bits for adults); goldfish, koi, and mosquitofish that prey on these pests; and solutions to make the water "move" more. Put the Dunks or pellets in your gutter drains to prevent larvae.

# SUMMER

## KEEP MOSQUITOES (AND OTHER PESTS) AT BAY

Continued.

- Make sure your door and window screens don't have holes.** A simple task you can do today! Walk through your home and check all of your screens. No one wants a buzzing mosquito nearby while trying to sleep! You can patch a screen yourself if you like ... check out DIY instructions on YouTube.
- Use an oscillating fan to blow mosquitos away.** It's an easy solution for an outside gathering on your deck or patio. Plus, a standing fan is a great way to cool things off on a hot night too.
- Hire a pest control service to manage any summertime problems (rats).** The summer means more spiders and, yes, rats. Do your part and keep your garbage contained and clear out debris in your yard so you don't have a tempting "home" for critters. A pest service can offer suggestions and solutions on how to deal with any problems, inside and outside of your home.
- Avoid having long grass to prevent ticks.** Mow your lawn regularly and remove leaves and debris, where ticks can thrive. Check yourself, your kids, and your pets after being outside.

## DIY PROJECTS IN THE SUN

Take advantage of summer mornings or late afternoons for some outside projects that need ventilation or sunny weather. Fumes won't bother you and items can dry in the sun.

- Spiff up inside or outside furniture.** It's a perfect time to strip, sand, or stain any flea market finds. You can even spray paint something a fun, bright color without worrying about the mess (still put down newspapers or covering to protect your grass or patio).
- Clean windows and screens.** If you haven't done this yet, a summer morning is the perfect time before it gets too hot. Spray wash your screens with a hose and the summer sun will dry them quickly.

# FALL

MAINTENANCE IN THE FALL IS ESSENTIAL SINCE IT'S SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE HOT DAYS OF SUMMER AND WINTER'S HARSH FREEZING WEATHER.

IT CAN BE A PRODUCTIVE TIME FOR YOU TO COMPLETE CERTAIN TASKS THAT ARE BETTER SUITED FOR ITS CRISP, COOL DAYS.

# FALL

## DOORS, WINDOWS & ATTIC

Fall is a good time to do these tasks so that you can save on winter heating bills:

- Add or replace weather-stripping around doors and windows to keep out drafts.
- Caulk around windows where cold air gets in.
- Get a good storm door for your entrance.
- Consider getting plastic shields to protect basement window wells.
- Insulate your attic and look at the benefits of cellulose insulation over fiberglass.
- Give your windows one more thorough cleaning (it's still warm enough to do this and have nice clean windows before winter hits).

## CHIMNEY

Important safety musts before building fires when the cooler air hits:

- Hire a professional to inspect and clean your chimney.
- Check to make sure the damper works properly. Close the damper when not in use, but don't forget to open it before lighting a fire.
- Examine for loose bricks and mortar and get it repointed. The earlier you catch this, the better. You want to avoid water damage and rebuilding a new chimney.
- Make sure your chimney is lined, even if you don't have a fireplace. Many gas hot water heaters and heating systems are vented through a chimney.
- Cap or screen the top to keep out rodents and birds seeking refuge.

# FALL

## CHIMNEY

Continued.

- Buy firewood but store it away from the exterior of your home (it can attract rodents!).
- Consider installing a gas fireplace if you have a gas line nearby. More natural-looking logs and ease of use make them ideal for many homeowners.

## FURNACE, DUCTS, AC UNIT & ETC.

Get your heating system and other units in top shape now before you start cranking up the heat. Condo owners may be responsible for their own units:

- Hire a HVAC professional to inspect and clean your furnace. Also check your whole-house central humidifier unit to make sure you'll have the right amount of moisture in the air (can help prevent winter colds).
- Stock up on furnace filters and change or clean them monthly depending on which type you use. Dirty filters make it more difficult for your HVAC system to work efficiently and will also limit the amount of dust, lint, airborne molds that go through your system.
- Drain air conditioning pipes and turn off its shut-off valve if you have one. Your HVAC professional may do this for you.
- Hire a professional to inspect air ducts for leaks in their joints; and have them cleaned if necessary.
- Ducts in cold spaces such as attics, basements, or crawl spaces should be insulated.
- Remove and store window AC units if you have them.
- Clean dryer vent by vacuuming the tube that leads to the vent and then vacuum from the outside dryer vent. This should be done every six months so include on both your fall and spring maintenance schedules.
- Clean and disinfect your portable humidifier if you have one in order to prevent mold and bacteria growth in the standing water.



# FALL

## THERMOSTAT

Keep your home toasty warm:

- Buy a programmable thermostat (so many less expensive ones to choose from now!) that allows you to set temperatures lower when you're not at home or sleeping. You'll save money!
- To prevent pipes from bursting, never set your thermostat below 55 degrees.

## HOME EXTERIOR

Prevent small issues from becoming huge issues:

### GUTTERS:

- Clean out gutters and downspouts of leaves and debris. Depending on where you live, you may have to clean your gutters several times in the fall.
- Blocked gutters can cause water damage to your home at any time. But in the winter, blocked gutters will trap water that can freeze, causing gutters to detach from your home.
- Many homes in DC have area drains near back doors or in their yards; make sure you clear those out of debris too.
- Make sure your gutters are directed so that they drain as far away from the house as possible and on a downslope. Check on this regularly during rainstorms to prevent major water damage.
- Inspect roof for any damage to shingles and double check seals around vents and chimney to prevent any leaks.
- Seal foundation cracks to prevent mice from sneaking in.
- Drain outdoor faucets and winterize in-ground watering systems so you don't get burst pipes inside your walls. Your plumber can show you how.
- Inspect your driveway for cracks. Seal it now to prevent winter damage.

# FALL

## YARD

Prep your yard to enjoy it fully now but also prepare it for winter weather:

- Rake leaves regularly in yard so you aren't overwhelmed with one big job at the end of the season. Check your community's leaf pick-up services, requirements, and schedule.
- Remove and weed any dead plants, especially those summer and early fall annuals.
- Prune shrubs before they go dormant. Cut back perennials; divide and transplant as needed. Aerate, fertilize, and seed your lawn in early fall.
- Plant bulbs now for springtime flowers. Look at catalogs and the internet for some ideas for your garden. Perennial flowers are less costly and time-consuming in the long run, making your yard look nice with less work each year.
- Trim tree branches that hang too close to your home or electrical wires. You don't want any surprises during a storm so hire a professional company to care for your trees and trim where necessary.

### **As you get closer to colder weather:**

- Drain garden hoses and store them inside.
- Clean and then cover outdoor furniture (or store it inside).
- Winterize sensitive plants such as roses, and stake any shrubs or young trees.

## POWER FAILURES & SEVERE WEATHER

Always be prepared to any weather disaster:

- Buy and store flashlights, batteries, candles, and matches in easy-to-reach locations. Get those battery-operated candles too if you're worried about matches and small children!
- Keep extra water bottles, nonperishable food (for pets too!), blankets and necessary medications on hand.
- Buy that snow shovel before it snows! Don't forget bags of ice-melt (pet-friendly ones) and sand.
- Find the phone numbers for your utility companies and put in your phone's contact list and any alert apps/text services that your community provides.

# WINTER

KEEP YOUR HOME PROTECTED AND PREPARED FOR THE HARSH WINTER. YOU'LL SAVE MONEY OVER THE LONG RUN SINCE REGULAR WINTER MAINTENANCE PREVENTS COSTLY DAMAGE TO YOUR HOME AND MAKES YOUR HOME MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT.

# WINTER

## DOORS, WINDOWS & ATTIC

These tasks can be simple DIY projects that can keep your home toasty and warm without having to crank up the heat. If you have an older, drafty home, this is a definite for you.

- Add or replace weather-stripping around doors and windows to keep out drafts.
- Caulk around windows where cold air gets in.
- Switch out summer screens and install storm windows, if you have them.
- Get a good storm door for your entrance.
- Consider getting plastic shields to protect basement window wells.
- Switch to heavier curtains or shades during the wintertime to help keep rooms warm.
- Insulate your attic and look at the benefits of cellulose insulation over fiberglass.

## CHIMNEY

Before you sit by the fire, you'll want to double-check our list below. You don't want to have any nasty surprises or create a fire hazard.

- Hire a professional to inspect and clean your chimney and make any recommended repairs.
- Close the damper when not in use, but don't forget to open it before lighting a fire.
- Cap or screen the top to keep out rodents and birds seeking refuge.
- Buy firewood but store it away from the exterior of your home.
- Many creatures like to make woodpiles their winter home.
- Consider getting a gas fireplace if you have a gas line. They look much more realistic than ever and are easy to switch on and off.
- If you are using any kind of fireplace—gas or wood-burning – be sure to have a carbon monoxide detector installed on every level.

# WINTER

## FURNACE, DUCTS & AC UNITS

No one wants to wake up in a bitter cold home. Do these now so you can relax over the winter months or head out of town with no worry about freezing pipes.

- Hire an HVAC professional to inspect and clean your furnace. Better yet, have a contract with a company that you can contact in case of an emergency outage so that they'll respond more quickly since you're a dedicated customer.
- Stock up on furnace filters and change them monthly. Can't make it to a local store or buy bulk at Costco, you can order these online to be delivered to your door! Amazon even has an automated ordering system now where you set it up once and can have them delivered every month automatically!
- Drain air conditioning pipes and turn off its shut-off valve if you have one.
- Hire a professional to inspect ducts for leaks in their joints, and have them cleaned if necessary.
- Ducts in cold spaces such as attics, basements, or crawl spaces should be insulated.
- Remove and store window AC units.
- Most furnaces have a "winter" setting on the ductwork to push more air to the lower levels during the winter months. If you find that your home has unequal heat, with some rooms or levels being colder or warmer than others, simply adjust the levers, and voila!
- If you have a gas-fired furnace, be sure you have a carbon monoxide detector on every level of your home.

# WINTER

## THERMOSTAT

These easy tasks can go a long way in saving energy and convenience.

- Buy a programmable thermostat that allows you to set temperatures lower when you're not at home or sleeping. There are so many smart technology options out there when it comes to thermostats so shop around.
- To prevent pipes from bursting, never set your thermostat below 55 degrees.

## OUTDOOR/HOME EXTERIOR

The outside of your home is where harsh winter storms and cold weather can do damage. Get these outside tasks done right now.

- Take the time to make sure gutters and downspouts are cleaned out thoroughly of leaves and debris. Water can freeze causing them to detach from your home. This can also cause major water damage to your home!
- Trim tree branches that hang too close to your home or electrical wires to avoid causing power outages.
- Drain garden hoses and store them inside.
- Drain outdoor faucets and winterize in-ground watering systems so you don't get burst pipes inside your walls. Watch YouTube videos to show you how to do this; it's easy and a must-do to keep your pipes from freezing!
- Cover outdoor furniture or store it inside. Do the same with sensitive potted plants.
- Seal foundation cracks to prevent mice from sneaking in.
- Sometimes eco-friendly composite decks and stairs can be more slick and hazardous when ice forms. Be careful since it might not be obvious!
- Stock up on pet-friendly salt or deicing treatments for your sidewalks, driveway, and porch to prevent slipping.

# WINTER

## POWER FAILURES & SEVERE WEATHER

When a storm hits, many neighborhoods lose power. Be ready with these tips.

- Store flashlights, a first-aid kit, and extra batteries in easy-to-reach locations. Consider getting some battery-operated candles instead of real candles to prevent any fire risk.
- Make sure your cell phone is charged if a storm is forecasted.
- Keep extra water bottles, nonperishable food (for babies and pets too!), blankets, and necessary medications on hand.
- Check that you have a working shovel and bags of ice-melt (remember pet-friendly brands!) or sand so you're ready for snow and ice.
- Consider getting a generator if your home or neighborhood loses power more often. It could be worth the money and might be needed if you have small children. Place the generator at least 20 feet from your house.
- Find the phone numbers and website of your utility companies. Post it somewhere for easy access.

## FIRE/CO SAFETY

Make sure your home doesn't have any unsuspecting hazards. We've already mentioned cleaning your chimney, getting your heating units inspected but there are other steps to include on your list.

- Make sure you have smoke detectors installed throughout your home and now's a great time to change the batteries. If your smoke detector is older than 7 years, replace it!
- If you have any gas-fired appliances – furnace, gas fireplace or even a gas stove or a wood-burning fireplace – be sure to install a Carbon Monoxide (CO) detector. It can alert you of the presence of the deadly, odorless, colorless gas, which causes headaches, nausea, and disorientation. Check batteries monthly.
- Be careful with space heaters. Make sure you don't leave them on and don't use extension cords.
- Keep grills, camp stoves, and generators out of the house, basement and garage.
- Do not heat your home with a gas range or oven.
- Never run a car or truck inside an attached garage.



PUT IN THE EFFORT ALL YEAR LONG AND YOU'LL REAP THE BENEFITS WITH A WELL-LOVED HOME YOU CAN ENJOY. ALSO, REMEMBER THAT REGULAR MAINTENANCE WILL HELP PRESERVE THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME.

LET ME KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE A CONTRACTOR REFERRAL SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE ALL THESE TASKS ON YOURSELF. I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

AS ALWAYS, I AM YOUR GO-TO RESOURCE FOR ALL THINGS REAL ESTATE.

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**THE COASTAL REAL ESTATE  
GROUP AT EXP REALTY**