

Fall 2006

Preparing for Winter

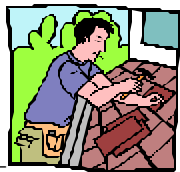
Frozen rain gutters, burst water pipes and other winter-related problems can be reduced or eliminated in October and November.



Heating – check heating systems annually. Properly maintained furnaces, fireplaces and wood-burning stoves prevent fire and smoke damage. Dust-clogged filters obstruct airflow forcing heating systems to work harder & increase energy bills. Check filters monthly and clean or replace as necessary.



Plumbing – Disconnect garden hoses, close indoor valves to outside faucets, and know the location of water pipes and how to shut the water off. If pipes do freeze, the quicker the water is shut off, or a plumber gets to the problem, the less chance the pipes will burst. Insulate unfinished rooms, attics, basements, crawl spaces or garages that have exposed pipes, or wrap pipes with heating tape or foam sleeves. If too much heat escapes through attics, snow or ice can melt on the roof, refreeze, causing more snow and ice buildup.



Roof – If possible, have the roof thoroughly inspected, replace broken or curled shingles and secure loose shingles. Check the chimney for missing or loose mortar. If water gets into joints with loose mortar, the freezing and thawing action turns mortar into powder. Faulty metal flashing around chimneys and roof seams is the cause of many leaks. If these areas are easy to get to, check the adhesive holding the flashing to the roof surface. If it's cracked, apply roofing cement to those areas.

Remove leaves and other debris from gutters so melting snow and ice can flow freely. If water doesn't properly drain through the gutters it may seep into the house.

Be prepared, spending a few dollars now could save you headaches and more money later.