



Winter Home Maintenance Checklist:

Keep Your Home Safe & Efficient This Season

The Wisconsin winter is harsh, and it will be here before we know it. Keep your home comfortable and protected with a winter home maintenance checklist.

Taking the time to inspect, clean, and maintain your interior and exterior will help you avoid costly and unsafe surprises. Preparing your home for winter will also improve its energy efficiency, save you money, and keep you and your family safe and cozy. Use this seasonal home maintenance checklist to ensure your home is ready for the first snowfall.

ROOF AND EXTERIOR STRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

Your roof and exterior are your home's first defense against freezing temps, snow, and ice. Taking time to inspect and maintain them now can ensure they work properly when they're needed most. It also prevents leaks, ice dams, and long-term structural damage.

Here's what you can start doing now:

INSPECT ROOFING MATERIALS

1. Look for missing, cracked, or curling shingles.
2. Check flashing around vents, skylights, and chimneys for gaps or corrosion.
3. Watch for signs of ice dam formation—heavy icicles or water pooling near the eaves may indicate trapped heat or poor ventilation.

***Pro tip:** If you notice major wear or leaks, schedule a professional roof inspection with Larson & Keeney Home Services.*



REMOVE ICE, SNOW, AND DEBRIS

- ☐ Use a roof rake to gently clear snow from roof edges and valleys.
- ☐ Keep gutters and downspouts free of debris to allow melting snow to drain properly.
- ☐ Avoid using rock salt, as it can damage shingles and metal flashing.

Letting snow accumulate can cause roof sagging and dangerous ice buildup around gutters.

CHECK WATER DRAINAGE

Inspect gutters, downspouts, and grading to ensure water flows away from your home's foundation:

- ☐ Confirm gutters and downspouts are securely fastened.
- ☐ Check grading around your home to ensure proper slope for drainage.

INSPECT SIDING AND TRIM

- ☐ Examine siding for cracks, warping, or water stains.
- ☐ Reseal gaps around windows and doors to prevent cold air leaks.
- ☐ Replace damaged caulk or loose trim before ice expands gaps further.



INTERIOR WALLS AND WINDOWS

Leaks around doors and windows cause excessive heat loss and high energy costs. Catch these issues early with a quick inspection of your home's interior barriers:

INSPECT WINDOWS AND DOORS

- ☐ Test locks and latches for smooth operation.
- ☐ Seal gaps to eliminate drafts.
- ☐ Look for condensation or water damage —it may signal a failing seal.



CHECK INTERIOR WALLS AND CEILINGS

- ☐ Watch for water stains, bubbling paint, or soft drywall, which can indicate roof leaks.
- ☐ Address issues early to prevent mold or ceiling collapse.



PLUMBING AND WATER SYSTEMS

Frozen pipes are one of the most common winter home disasters. The good news is that you can reduce the chance of pipe bursts and leaks with a few winter home maintenance checklist steps:

INSPECT PIPES AND DRAINS

- ☐ Check pipes and drains for leaks.
- ☐ Drain exterior faucets.
- ☐ Consult a professional to insulate exposed pipes.

SUMP PUMPS AND FLOOR DRAINS

- ☐ Check that the sump pump and valve are working
- ☐ Confirm proper basement drainage - look for wet surfaces, puddles, or wall discoloration.

WATER HEATERS AND FILTRATION

- ☐ Flush the tank to remove sediment buildup.
- ☐ Check for corrosion around fittings and valves.
- ☐ Replace filters or softener cartridges as needed.



ELECTRICAL AND SAFETY CHECKS

Winter storms can often lead to power outages and electrical hazards. Stay prepared by following this electrical home maintenance checklist for winter:

SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

- ☐ Test all detectors monthly.
- ☐ Regularly test and replace batteries.
- ☐ If you experience symptoms like headaches, dizziness, or nausea, leave the house immediately.

ELECTRICAL OUTLETS AND CORDS

- ☐ Inspect cords for fraying or damage.
- ☐ Test GFCI outlets in bathrooms, kitchens, and garages.
- ☐ Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.



HVAC SYSTEMS AND FILTERS

Preventative HVAC maintenance is essential for winter comfort. Regular furnace inspections, timely filter replacements, and airflow checks help ensure your heating system runs efficiently and safely.

FURNACE INSPECTION

- ☐ Schedule a professional inspection before the winter season to ensure safe operation and efficiency.
- ☐ Clear flammable materials from around the furnace area.

If your system is old or not working well, think about a professional furnace upgrade before winter.



FILTER REPLACEMENT

- ☐ Replace air filters every 30–90 days, depending on type and household size.
- ☐ Use filters with a MERV rating of 8–12 for balanced airflow and capture.

CEILING FANS AND DUCTS

- ☐ Reverse the ceiling fan direction to push warm air down.
- ☐ Vacuum and seal ducts to prevent heat loss.



BASEMENTS, CRAWLSPACES, AND ATTICS

Basements, crawlspaces, and attics are among the most vulnerable areas for hidden moisture, mold, and pests. If you spot musty smells, discoloration, or standing water in your attic, you may have a roof leak. Here's how to get ahead of it:

INSPECT FOR MOISTURE AND MOLD

- ☐ Check walls, floors, and insulation for dampness or discoloration.

CHECK VENTILATION AND INSULATION

- ☐ Ensure attic vents are open and unobstructed to prevent condensation.
- ☐ Add insulation to maintain steady indoor temperatures.



PEST INSPECTION

- ☐ Look for droppings, nests, or gnawed material.
- ☐ Seal cracks and use traps or professional pest control if needed.



GARAGE AND OUTBUILDINGS

When developing a winter home maintenance checklist, garages and outbuildings are often overlooked. However, they are a common spot for water intrusion, pests, and winter safety concerns.

INSPECT GARAGE DOORS

- ☐ Test automatic openers and safety sensors.
- ☐ Lubricate hinges and rollers for smoother operation in the cold.

CHECK STORAGE AND PESTS

- ☐ Keep salt, fuel, and snow tools organized for quick access.
- ☐ Inspect for rodents or insects.



Common Winter Home Maintenance Mistakes To Avoid

A well-maintained home remains secure and comfortable year-round. By following a seasonal home maintenance checklist, you can avoid these common mistakes that put you and your home at risk:

CHECK STORAGE AND PESTS

Inspect and clean your roof and gutter systems monthly to prevent ice dams, leaks, and mold growth. If your roof shows signs of wear or damage, consider a professional roof replacement or roof installation to restore long-term protection and efficiency.

IGNORING HVAC AND FURNACE MAINTENANCE

Schedule annual HVAC service and replace filters regularly to keep your heating system running at peak performance. Routine maintenance improves efficiency, lowers energy costs, and helps prevent unexpected breakdowns during the coldest months.

FORGETTING PIPE INSULATION

Uninsulated pipes are vulnerable to freezing temperatures that can cause them to crack or burst, leading to costly water damage. Protect exposed plumbing with foam sleeves or heat tape, especially in basements, crawl spaces, and exterior walls.

SKIPPING SAFETY CHECKS

Safety should always come first. Routinely test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, inspect electrical cords, and replace old batteries to reduce fire risks and ensure your family stays protected all year long.

For expert help with your winter home maintenance checklist, reach out to **Larson & Keeney Home Services**, your leading roofing company in Milwaukee.



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