

HEAT RELIEF

HEATING & COOLING



February Outside To Do List

Regular maintenance keeps your home functioning efficiently and safely – and helps protect its value. A winter home maintenance checklist is a great way to start working on early prevention and home maintenance for the winter months when Mother Nature is at her worst.

- Check and test GFCIs.** Once snow and ice accumulate on outside outlets and lights, it can easily go into a melt and thaw cycle that can make moisture get trapped where it shouldn't. If this causes a short circuit, then you have the potential for a fire hazard.
- Check all outside and inside valves for leaks** and replace or repair them as needed. Even the littlest of drips can create a freeze and thaw cycle that can damage pipes or cause them to burst.
- Check to ensure attic vents** are not blocked by animal nests or leaf material.
- Examine windows and doors for ice accumulation or cold air leaks.** If found, make a note to repair or replace in the spring.
- Examine attic for frost accumulation.** Check roof for ice dams or icicles.
- Keep snow clear** of gas meters, gas appliance vents, exhaust vents and basement windows.
- Monitor outdoor vents,** gas meters and chimneys for ice and snow buildup. Consult with an appropriate contractor or your gas utility for information on how to safely deal with any ice problems you may discover.
- Check the snow load on your roof.** If it seems excessive, call a roofing contractor to remove the snow, which could otherwise cause the roof to leak or collapse.
- Clean out sheds and other outdoor buildings.** Get rid of any hazardous materials.
- Garage doors.** Check to make sure they run smoothly and quietly. In the down position you can lubricate the hinges, rollers and tracks with the proper lubricant for your garage door.
- Make sure all your tools have been cleaned, sharpened, and are ready to go.** There is nothing quite as vexing as having a perfectly good weekend opportunity to mow the lawn only to discover that the blades are dull or it otherwise needs service. It's your last best chance to get your implements in prime working order this month. Waiting could result in longer wait times as other procrastinators discover the same thing.
- It's a good time to **inventory your supplies including seeds** too. Seeds, if kept dry and cool, will often be just as good as they were last year. Use them up, but don't rely on them.
- Plan what you are going to grow this year.**
- Start seeds if you plan to grow your own.** Many seeds need to be started 6-8 weeks before the last frost. In many areas of the country—depending on germination time and when to transplant—the best time to start seeds is in February.
- Prune roses—18 inches is the optimum height.**
- Fertilize perennials in temperate areas and rototill empty garden beds** if soil is dry enough.