

BBB Tip: Fall Home Maintenance

By Better Business Bureau



The air is getting cooler and the leaves and cornfields are turning yellow. Fall is here. With the change in weather comes a list of home maintenance that all homeowners should tackle before the really cold stuff sets in.

BBB offers these tips when preparing your home for the colder weather:

- **Clean those gutters.** A build up of leaves and other debris can cause your gutters and downspouts to not drain properly. Improper draining can make water spill over your gutters which can lead to foundation damage and damage to your fascia boards. To get a listing of gutter contractors near you, visit BBB.org.
- **Inspect your roof.** Damaged or loose shingles can let in water and ice during the winter which can create interior damage. Visit BBB.org to get a listing of roofing contractors near you.
- **Test your smoke and carbon dioxide detectors.** Making sure these important safety tools are in proper working condition is easy and vital to ensuring the safety of those in your home. The National Fire Protection Association offers great information on installing and maintaining smoke alarms.
- **Check your windows and doors for air leakage.** Adding caulk and weather stripping helps prevent leakage of cold air into your home as well as spiders and insects. Also check where pipes and wires enter your home.
- **Organize your garage.** You will undoubtedly use your garage a lot more in the colder months. Get rid of trash and clutter and make sure your winter-use items are easily accessible. Fill/repair any cracks or holes you see to prevent bugs and rodents from entering that will be seeking refuge from the cold.
- **Inspect your driveway.** The frequent freezing and thawing conditions in many areas, along with tree roots and ground shifting, can cause driveways to develop areas of

needed repair. Fall is a great time to fill cracks and sealcoat to prevent wintertime water/ice damage.

- **Schedule HVAC maintenance.** According to the U.S. Department of Energy, preventive maintenance can help save you up to 25% in energy costs. Heating contractors near you can help you professionally service your heating unit.
- **Tend to the outside water supply.** Cover up your outside water spigot(s). Spigot covers help keep the exterior pipes from freezing and are reasonably priced at your local hardware store. Empty hoses of any water and move them indoors.
- **Sweep your chimney.** Having the soot and possible blockages or creosote build-up helps reduce the risk of a chimney fire and can improve the efficiency of your fireplace.
- **Change the direction of your ceiling fan.** In the colder months, you want your fan moving the warm air down, which means having your blades turn clockwise.