

PREPPING YOUR HOME FOR

Winter

A THREE-PART CHECKLIST FOR A SAFER, WARMER HOME

Exterior

- ☐ **Disconnect hoses:** remove, drain, and store them
- ☐ **Shut off outdoor water:** close the indoor shut-off valve for exterior spigots, then open the outdoor faucet to drain any remaining water
- ☐ **Install insulated faucet covers** on outdoor spigots
- ☐ **Drain and winterize irrigation system:** have the lines blown out if you have sprinklers
- ☐ **Clean gutters:** clear leaves and debris to prevent ice dams
- ☐ **Check downspouts:** make sure they direct water at least 4-6 feet from the foundation
- ☐ **Trim trees:** cut back branches near the house, roof, or power lines, and remove any dead or weak limbs
- ☐ **Check the roof:** look for loose, cracked, or missing shingles and damaged flashing, and call a pro for questionable areas before snow makes them worse
- ☐ **Inspect the chimney:** schedule a sweep and inspection if you use a fireplace or wood stove
- ☐ **Seal exterior gaps:** caulk cracks around windows, doors, siding, and where pipes or wires enter the house
- ☐ **Check the foundation and driveway:** seal cracks so water can't freeze and widen them
- ☐ **Service outdoor equipment:** drain gas from the lawn mower or run it dry, and tune up the snow blower (fresh fuel, spark plug, shear pins)
- ☐ **Store or cover outdoor furniture, grills, and planters**
- ☐ **Stock traction and snow gear:** snow shovel, ice scraper, and rock salt, kitty litter, or sand
- ☐ **Mark the edges of your driveway and walkways** with stakes so they're easy to find under snow
- ☐ **Check exterior lighting** on steps, walkways, and entrances
- ☐ **Winterize the garage:** check the door seal and keep a shovel and salt near the door
- ☐ **Prep your vehicles:** winter tires or tire check, wiper blades, washer fluid, battery, antifreeze, and an emergency kit in the trunk

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Interior

- ☐ **Service your heating system:** change the filter and have a professional inspect it
- ☐ **Replace furnace filters regularly** throughout the season (usually every 1-3 months)
- ☐ **Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors:** replace batteries and check expiration dates (most units last 7-10 years)
- ☐ **Check your fire extinguisher:** confirm it's charged and easy to reach
- ☐ **Seal air leaks:** add or replace worn weather stripping around windows and doors
- ☐ **Add door sweeps or draft stoppers** at the bottom of exterior doors
- ☐ **Insulate windows:** use window film, insulated curtains, or caulk gaps
- ☐ **Lock windows:** this action will pull the sashes or interlocks tightly together
- ☐ **Check attic insulation** and seal gaps around attic hatches and recessed lighting
- ☐ **Locate your main water shut-off valve** and make sure everyone in the household knows where it is and how to use it
- ☐ **Reverse ceiling fans:** set them to run clockwise on low to push warm air down
- ☐ **Know your plan for extended absences:** keep the heat at 55°F or above, and consider shutting off and draining the water if you'll be away long
- ☐ **Open cabinet doors under sinks on exterior walls** during extreme cold to let warm air reach the pipes
- ☐ **Drain and insulate the water heater,** or flush sediment if it's due
- ☐ **Clean the dryer vent** to reduce fire risk and improve efficiency
- ☐ **Vacuum or dust radiators, baseboard heaters, and vents,** and make sure furniture isn't blocking them
- ☐ **Bleed radiators** if you have a hot-water system
- ☐ **Program or test your thermostat** and replace its batteries
- ☐ **Check the fireplace damper** and have firewood or fuel stocked and stored dry
- ☐ **Confirm space heaters are in good condition,** with working auto shut-off, and keep them 3 feet from anything flammable

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Emergency Preparedness

Water, Food, and Cooking

- ☐ **Water:** store at least one gallon per person per day, for at least 3 days (a week is better)
- ☐ **Food:** stock non-perishables that need no refrigeration or cooking, like canned soups, protein bars, dried fruit, peanut butter, crackers, and cereal
- ☐ **Manual can opener**
- ☐ **Alternative cooking source**, if safe to use: camp stove or grill (outdoors only, never indoors), with fuel, matches, and a lighter
- ☐ **Disposable plates, cups, and utensils** to save water on dishes
- ☐ **Pet supplies:** food, water, medications, litter, waste bags, and a leash or carrier

Power, Light, and Communication

- ☐ **Flashlights and extra batteries** (avoid candles where you can)
- ☐ **Battery-powered or hand-crank radio**, ideally with NOAA weather alerts
- ☐ **Portable phone chargers or power banks**, fully charged before storms
- ☐ **Car phone charger**
- ☐ **Generator safety:** if you have one, test it, store fuel safely, and only run it outdoors, well away from doors, windows, and vents
- ☐ **Whistle** to signal for help
- ☐ **Written list of emergency contacts**, in case phones die
- ☐ **Know your utility's outage number** and save it in your phone

Warmth

- ☐ **Blankets and sleeping bags:** heavy wool blankets, thermal bedding, or sleeping bags for each household member
- ☐ **Warm clothing:** extra layers, thermal socks, hats, gloves, and heavy coats
- ☐ **Hand and body warmers**
- ☐ **Plan to shelter in one room** during an outage by closing doors, hanging blankets over windows, and gathering everyone together

Health and Safety

- ☐ **First aid kit:** well stocked and easy to find
- ☐ **Medications:** keep at least a week's supply of prescriptions and crucial medical supplies (think contact lens solution) on hand at all times
- ☐ **Copies of important documents:** insurance, IDs, and medical information in a waterproof bag
- ☐ **Cash in small bills**, since ATMs and card readers may not work during an outage
- ☐ **Basic tools:** multi tool, duct tape, and work gloves
- ☐ **Keep your car's gas tank at least half full** during winter storms
- ☐ **Know the signs of frostbite, hypothermia, and carbon monoxide poisoning**