



Fall Maintenance Schedule

- **Clean the chimney and fireplace**
Hire a chimney sweep to remove build-up of combustible creosote from the chimney, hearth, and firebox. If you don't use your fireplace more than a few times a year, do this every couple of years instead of annually.
- **Unclog the gutters**
Clean the gutter channels, and clear downspouts of debris. Make sure that the downspouts funnel water away from the foundation. Replace broken or deteriorating gutters or downspouts.
- **Inspect the foundation**
Look for signs of water damage. Make sure that dirt around the house is graded to drain water away from the foundation. If you have an underground drainage system or sump pump, make sure it operates properly.
- **Check the heating system**
Change filters and check registers and ducts for blockages. Hire a professional to have your furnace inspected for leaks and burner efficiency. Regularly dust registers and intake grills using your vacuum's crevice tool.
- **Insulate**
Replace or add caulk or weather stripping around doors or windows, between the foundation and siding, and wherever bricks and wood make contact. Both of these flexible sealants degrade over time. Make sure you have sufficient attic insulation: Most areas require at least six inches of insulation material.
- **Winterize your windows**
If you have window units or doors with combination screen/storm windows, remove screens, wash and store, and install storm windows. Remove window air-conditioning units.
- **Prepare your yard**
Rake leaves and add them to the compost heap. Prune trees and shrubs. Mow and fertilize the lawn. Store patio furniture, summer sports equipment, and garden tools. Plant spring bulbs and divide and replant perennials.
- **Lubricate hinges**
Apply oil to door and window hinges. Don't forget garage doors.
- **Tidy the garage**
Move indoors anything that might freeze, such as paint, caulk, and adhesives. Discard hazardous materials (such as paints and solvents) according to local rules; call your local waste-disposal department for information.