21 ways to winterize your home.



The weather outside isn't quite yet frightful, which makes now the perfect time to prepare.

Before the chill sets in and the snow comes down, get your house ready for the winter with these easy (and efficient) tips:

1. Remove and store any window air conditioners. (Surely, you won't be needing these this season.)
2. Turn off your central air conditioner's water valve.
3. Get your heating system serviced, so you can be sure it's ready for the winter.
4. Change your furnace filters, because a dirty one can reduce airflow and increase energy use.
5. Inspect your windows, and repair or replace as needed.
6. Seal any drafty windows or patio doors with clear plastic.
7. Inspect the doors you use on a daily basis. If a draft is coming in from underneath, add a rubber strip to seal it off.
8. Install a dryer vent seal to keep cold air from coming in.
9. Caulk any gaps or cracks in windows, doors and walls.
10. Add insulation. (Most attics should have at least 12 to 15 inches of it.)
11. Replace any worn or missing shingles on the roof.
12. Get your chimney cleaned.
13. Clear your gutters.
14. Drain your rain barrels.
15. Trim your trees.
16. Close off any rooms that aren't in use, and close their vents.
17. Make sure furniture, carpeting and curtains aren't blocking any vents in use.
18. Set your ceiling fans to run in reverse, as a clockwise rotation can actually produce warmer air.

19. Stock up on emergency supplies.
20. Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
21. Review your home insurance policy, and talk to an agent if you notice anything that needs updating.

Traveling this winter? Keep your home safe while you're away. Here's how.