Seasonal Guide for Homeowners

007 PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Your Seasonal Homeowner's Guide: Preparing for the Months Ahead

Taking care of your home throughout the year helps maintain its value, efficiency, and comfort. This guide offers essential tips to prepare various aspects of your property for seasonal changes, especially as colder weather approaches.

Enhance Your Home's Insulation

Making sure your home is well-insulated is key to keeping it warm and managing energy costs.

Attic and Crawlspace: A good rule of thumb is to check if your attic or crawlspace has at least 11 to 12 inches of insulation. If it has less, adding more can significantly improve your home's thermal performance. Consider using either batt insulation (rolls or pre-cut pieces) or blown-in insulation for the best results. It's wise to consult a home improvement specialist to determine the ideal "R-value" (insulation's resistance to heat flow) for your specific climate and home.

Water Heater and Hot Water Pipes: To prevent heat loss and save energy, consider insulating your water heater. You can use an insulation blanket kit or fiberglass insulation. Also, insulate any hot water pipes that run through unheated areas, like a basement or under your house, using preformed foam pipe sleeves.

Seal Up Your Home's Drafts

Minimizing air leaks is crucial for energy efficiency and preventing drafts.

Windows: As colder weather arrives, remove window screens and install storm windows. Storm windows provide an extra layer of insulation, reducing heat loss.

Fireplace: If you have a fireplace, ensure its damper closes as tightly as possible when you're not using it. This action is critical for preventing warm air from escaping up the chimney and cold air from entering your living space.

Drafty Areas: Effectively "zipping up" your home against the elements involves caulking, sealing, and weatherstripping around all gaps, cracks, and openings. Pay close attention to areas around windows and where exterior materials like siding or bricks meet wood trim. Don't forget to seal around electrical outlets and plumbing connections that penetrate exterior walls.

Ductwork: Inspect your home's ductwork for any visible cracks or air leaks. Use mastic sealant or specialized duct-sealing tape (not standard duct tape, which isn't effective long-term for ducts) to seal these areas. This ensures your heated or cooled air reaches its intended destination efficiently.

Improve Indoor Air Quality and Heating Efficiency

Good indoor air quality and efficient heating contribute to a healthier and more comfortable home environment.

Furnace Filters: For forced-air heating systems, it's recommended to change your air filters monthly, especially during peak heating seasons. Starting the cooler months with a fresh filter can significantly improve air quality and furnace efficiency.

Heat Sources: Regularly dust and clean air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators. Keeping these heat sources free of dust and obstructions allows them to operate more efficiently, warming your home more effectively.

Ceiling Fans: In colder weather, change the direction of your ceiling fans to operate in reverse (clockwise when looking up). This setting pushes warm air that naturally rises near the ceiling back down into the room, helping to circulate heat and improve comfort.

Fact: *The average cost for a new central air conditioning unit with installation in Tennessee can vary significantly based on factors like the unit's size (tonnage), SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) rating, brand, complexity of installation, and local labor rates. But in reality those cost vary from $3000 (small unit only) to $15,000.*

The average cost is: $7,500.

Maintain Your Lawn and Garden

Proper seasonal care for your outdoor spaces ensures they remain healthy and vibrant for the next growing season.

Cool-Season Grasses: If you have cool-season grasses such as ryegrass, fescue, or bluegrass, apply fertilizer in early November or before the ground freezes. This helps nourish the roots for healthy spring growth.

Bulbs: For those in milder climates, early November is an ideal time to plant hardy bulbs, allowing them to establish roots before winter.

Garden Beds: Clean up vegetable and perennial beds. Remove spent plants and weeds, and prepare the soil for next season's planting by adding compost or other amendments.

Leaves: Rake and remove any leaves left on your lawn. A thick layer of leaves can trap moisture and encourage lawn diseases or pests.

Power Equipment: Perform annual maintenance on push mowers, string trimmers, and other outdoor power equipment before storing them for the winter. This includes changing oil, cleaning filters, and stabilizing fuel.

Outdoor Storage: Store lawn and garden equipment, as well as patio furniture, indoors or under protective covers to shield them from harsh winter weather, extending their lifespan.

Water Systems: Before the first hard freeze, ensure all garden hoses are drained and disconnected, outdoor faucets are turned off and drained, and sprinkler systems are properly winterized (blown out) to prevent freezing and bursting pipes.

Bird Feeders: Continue to regularly clean and refill bird feeders throughout the winter months to provide a vital food source for local bird populations.

Ready to Ensure Your Home's Health?

Regular maintenance and timely inspections are key to a safe and efficient home. If you're buying, selling, or just need peace of mind about your property, don't wait. Call us today for your professional home inspection! We're here to help Murfreesboro homeowners protect their biggest investment.

For questions and concerns, reach out to us!

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