

HOUSE FACTSTM NOTES

Fall 2005

FALL HOME TIPS FROM UPSTATE HOME INSPECTION

Winterize Your Home with These Easy Tips from Upstate Home Inspection

Winter is just around the bend. Preparing your home now for the coming cold months will help save you time, money, and energy!

The changing colors of the leaves ought to serve as a gentle reminder that winter is not far behind the beautiful days of fall. It is wise to take advantage of one of those beautiful days to begin winterizing your home. By taking just a few hours to inspect and make some minor repairs on your home, you will be able to:

- Increase fuel efficiency & conserve energy
- Lower your monthly bills
- Keep your home safe from winter damage

Oh great, how much is it going to cost me to winterize my home?

We're not here to sell you a new furnace, or recommend that you replace all of your windows. We simply want to offer some tips for how you can protect your home from harsh weather. None of these tips are foolproof, but they are effective preventative measures, that won't cost you a fortune. Better yet, they rarely require more than a bit of time and quick trip to the home improvement store.

Air leaks*:

Air leaks are the largest source of heating loss in the home. Air leaks occur around windows and doors. A simple test to see if air is coming through windows or doors is to hold a piece of paper (or a napkin) in front of the suspected leak. If the paper is blowing, you need to replace the weather stripping and/or caulking until it is sealed tightly and your paper no longer flutters. Weather stripping and caulking are available at home improvement stores, and many hardware stores.

Furnace Function*:

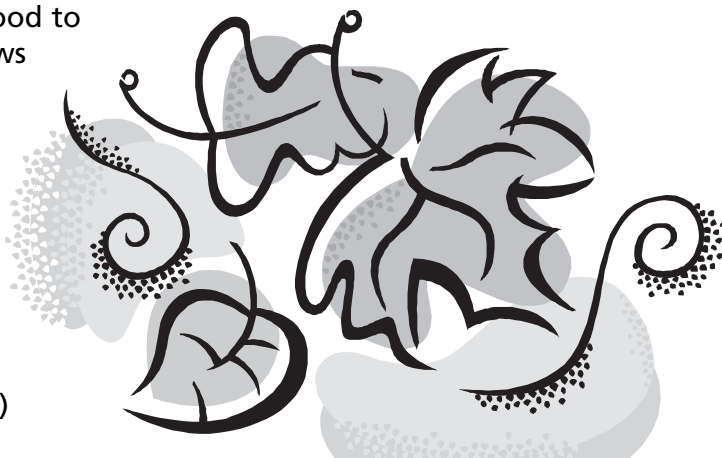
It won't do you any good to seal all of your windows and doors if your furnace is not working properly. We recommend vacuuming the vents and all heating components first. Then check to make sure that the air circulation fan and the gas (or oil)

burner is operating correctly. Lastly, replace the furnace filter as directed by the manufacturer.

Insulation*:

Check the insulation in your attic, ceilings, exterior and basement walls, floors, and crawlspaces to see that it meets the levels recommended for your area. A general guideline for the appropriate amount of insulation suggests that it be at least six inches thick. However, you ought to check with the staff at your local home improvement store to find out how much insulation is recommending

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in your particular area. If the insulation in your home does not meet their recommendations, you should supplement what you have with additional insulation.

** These are bare minimum ways to inspect and winterize your home.*

I found a problem. Can I fix it myself?

These recommended tips are suggestions only. For any tasks that involve tools or expertise beyond your capabilities or comfort level, hire a qualified contractor. Likewise, if fixing a problem poses a safety hazard, it's best to leave that to the experts. Such instances would include, repairing or replacing your furnace, roofing, and in some cases insulation.

Here are some things to keep in mind when selecting your contractor:

- Get referrals. Who do your friends and neighbors hire to help them?
- Get all estimates in writing. If the estimate is more than \$200, obtain several estimates.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau for complaints prior to hiring any contractor.

If You Knew Then, What You Know Now...

That's why the Home Health Care Program excels. We believe that prevention is the best medicine. The Home Health Care Program from Upstate Home Inspection is a great way to keep informed on the condition of your home each year. During our annual "check-up" one of our trained inspectors will come to your home, and notify you of any of the above mentioned "trouble spots." That means that we will let you know prior to the winter season what you'll want to do to prevent damage to your home (and your wallet). Our certified inspectors are trained to identify warning signs of leaks, furnace trouble, insulation needs, and more. And that's just for the winter...we provide you with advice for all the days of the year.

The Home Health Care Program—keeping your home in the best possible health! Contact us at 518.365.0920 or via email at dosborn@upstateinspection.com to learn more about the program.



**Upstate
Home Inspection
Service**

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Other Quick & Easy Tips:

Here are a few other good ideas for winterizing your home.

- Clean your gutters and downspouts.
- Keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use.
- Shut off water valve to outside faucets, and disconnect all hoses.
- Look for cracks in sidewalks and driveways, so that they do not allow water to seep in and freeze—cracks less than 1/2 inch wide can usually just be caulked.
- Keep the thermostat at a maximum of 72 degrees during the day, and 65 degrees at night, and when you're not home.



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