

FALL HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS

Fall can be a busy season for household chores. "It's always a good time to prep the house for the winter," Meisinger says. That means getting heating systems in order and preparing for the cooler weather ahead. Here are important home maintenance tasks to complete in fall:

Clean out gutters. Falling leaves and debris can fill gutters and clog downspouts. In snowy climates, ice dams are the main hazard associated with clogged gutters going into the winter months. However, keeping gutters free of dirt and debris should help you avoid the problem.

Add insulation. Insulation is important not only for comfort, but also for protecting the integrity of your home. It can prevent ice dams and pipes from freezing and may protect against fires. However, be careful not to add too much insulation.

Protect pipes. Water pipes in crawl spaces, attics or basements may be prone to freezing in the winter. Adding insulation to a house is one way to prevent that from happening. Other ways to prevent freezing include plugging drafty cracks or holes in walls near pipes or wrapping them with foam or another insulating substance.

Clean the chimney. The fall is a good time to have a professional inspect and clean your chimney if you have a fireplace. They can remove creosote that has built up inside and check for other potential hazards such as bird nests and debris.

Inspect your HVAC system. You don't want to wait until the winter to have your furnace checked. A tech will clean the system, look for leaks and monitor for potential issues that could impact its efficiency." Fall is also a good time to have boilers, radiators, heat pumps and similar systems inspected.

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