



Linda Nelson – Compass Realtor

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As the crisp air of fall settles in, it's the perfect time to prepare your home for the colder months ahead. A little preventive maintenance now can help protect your investment, improve efficiency, and give you peace of mind all winter long.

Outdoor Maintenance

- **Clean gutters & downspouts:** Remove leaves, twigs, and debris. Flush with a hose to prevent clogs and ice dams. Ensure downspouts direct water at least 3–4 feet away from the foundation.
- **Inspect the roof:** Look for missing, curled, or damaged shingles; check flashing and seal around chimneys, skylights, and vents.
- **Check siding & exterior paint:** Touch up peeling or cracking paint; inspect for signs of pests or rot.
- **Trim trees & shrubs:** Keep branches away from roof, siding, and power lines to prevent storm damage.
- **Rack leaves:** Keep the lawn looking great by removing any leaves
- **Shut off & drain outdoor faucets:** Disconnect hoses, shut off exterior valves, and drain lines to prevent frozen pipes.
- **Store outdoor furniture & equipment:** Clean and cover patio sets, grills, and garden tools. Store in a shed or garage.
- **Inspect driveways & walkways:** Repair cracks before freeze-thaw cycles cause further damage.
- **Check exterior lighting:** Replace bulbs, clean fixtures, and consider motion-sensor lights for darker evenings.

Heating & HVAC

- **Furnace inspection & tune-up:** Schedule a professional service before heavy use.
- **Replace furnace filter:** Improves air quality and efficiency (change every 1–3 months).
- **Check thermostat:** Test for proper function and consider upgrading to a programmable or smart thermostat.
- **Inspect vents & ducts:** Vacuum registers, ensure airflow isn't blocked, and consider duct cleaning if it's been years.

- **Test carbon monoxide detectors:** Replace batteries and confirm units aren't expired.

Plumbing & Water Systems

- **Insulate exposed pipes:** Especially in basements, crawlspaces, or near exterior walls to prevent freezing.
- **Check sump pump:** Test operation and clean pit to ensure it's ready for heavy rains.
- **Flush water heater:** Remove sediment buildup to improve efficiency and lifespan.
- **Check for leaks:** Inspect under sinks, around toilets, and near water heaters.

Interior Maintenance

- **Test smoke detectors:** Replace batteries and units older than 10 years.
- **Inspect windows & doors:** Check seals, weatherstripping, and caulking. Replace or repair as needed to prevent drafts.
- **Wash window & doors:** helps more light come through during the darker months.
- **Reverse ceiling fans:** Switch to clockwise rotation to push warm air down.
- **Deep clean carpets & upholstery:** Helps reduce allergens before winter.
- **Inspect attic & basement:** Look for signs of moisture, pests, or insulation gaps.

Winter Prep

- **Stock up on supplies:** Salt, ice melt, snow shovels, or a snow blower tune-up.
- **Check emergency kit:** Flashlights, batteries, bottled water, blankets, and first-aid supplies.
- **Seal air leaks:** Use weatherstripping or caulk on drafty areas.
- **Inspect fireplace & chimney:** Have professionally cleaned if you use it regularly.

General Clean-Up

- **Clean dryer vents:** Remove lint buildup to prevent fire hazards.
- **Vacuum refrigerator coils:** Improves energy efficiency.
- **Declutter storage areas:** Organize garage, attic, or basement before winter.
- **Check safety equipment:** Fire extinguishers should be charged and accessible.