

Outdoor Spaces

Making sure the outside of your home is cold-weather ready is just as important as taking care of the inside during the winter months. Taking these steps will ensure your home is ready for winter's frosty visitors.



Fire Prevention

Fireplaces can cause house fires if you aren't careful. Proper safety methods should be taken outdoors as well as indoors to prevent dangerous fires.

- ✿ If you store firewood outdoors, be sure to stack it at least 30 feet away from your home.
- ✿ Keep your roof as clear as you can of potential fire starters like leaves, pine needles and other debris. Remove branches hanging above the chimney, flues, or vents.
- ✿ Ensure roof-covering assemblies do not contain openings that allow firebrand entry.
- ✿ Make sure eaves that extend beyond exterior walls are constructed with fire-resistive materials.
- ✿ Cover all vent openings to the attic, eave/soffit, foundation, etc. with a corrosion-resistant, non-combustible, 1/4 inch or smaller wire mesh or screen that prevents firebrands from entering your home.
- ✿ FEMA recommends installing spark arrestors on all chimneys, stovepipes and vents for fuel-burning heaters. Use spark arrestors made of 12-gauge welded or woven wire mesh screen with openings 1/2 inch across.
- ✿ Click [here](#) for additional fire prevention tips from FLASH.

Sidewalk and Walkways

Winter season brings a number of guests to your door, including snow and ice. Keep walkways and driveways clear and safe with these tips:

- ✿ Before the storm approaches, lay down a layer of deicing sand/salt to minimize the buildup of ice during the storm.
- ✿ After the storm, lay down layers of deicing sand/salt to melt the snow and ice. Once it begins to melt you can chip away at the layers with a snow shovel to remove it from steps and walkways.
- ✿ Once you have finished clearing your walkways, consider being a Snow Angel for a person in your community who may need a little help. Click [here](#) for details.

Source: Federal Alliance for Safe Homes, Inc. -- FLASH

“Winterizing” the Backyard

Those decks and plants that brought so much joy this summer need to be protected during the winter months so they will be ready to go once the temperatures begin to rise.

- ✿ If possible, move outdoor furniture, grills, toys, and other items to a covered and protected space. This will prolong the life of these objects and make it significantly easier to clear snow and ice from a deck after a storm. Once the deck is clear, seal it to protect against snow, ice, rain, and other elements
- ✿ If you have plants outside that cannot take cold weather, consider moving them indoors bringing a little life and décor to the inside of your home. If this isn't possible, cover plants and shrubs when temperatures are forecasted to drop below tolerable levels.
- ✿ Once all the leaves have fallen, clean your gutters of any debris, and install gutter downspout extensions a minimum of four feet from the house. This will allow melting snow and rain to flow away from the house preventing floods.
- ✿ Turn off and drain all of your outdoor plumbing including hose connections, pool connections, sprinkler systems, etc. After you've turned off the water, leave faucets in the "on" position and remove any plastic components.
- ✿ Drain the gas from your lawn mower, and service your snow blower with a tune-up.

Source: Farmer's Almanac and Kohler Generators

