

## How to prepare your home for winter

Preparing your home for a long, cold winter is something every homeowner should consider before the season really takes hold. Here are three quick and easy jobs you can do to help winterize your home, and leave yourself feeling as handy as Mike Holmes.

### 1. Clear your eaves

This is not a complicated task, but it's an important job nonetheless. Clogged eavestroughs can lead to the formation of ice dams, which can tear off gutters, loosen shingles and leave your roof vulnerable to leaks.

Simply climb to the edge of your roof and carefully dig out the debris. It's not necessary to remove every small stone. The main purpose is to make sure nothing restricts the flow of water, and that no stagnant water remains in the gutters.

### 2. Shut off exterior faucets

Cold winter temperatures can cause your pipes to freeze and burst inside your home, which can result in major water damage.

Locate and close any shut-off valves that lead to outside faucets, and drain any excess water inside the lines. It's also a good idea to also drain any interior pipes in unheated areas of your home, such as your attic.

### 3. Test smoke and CO2 detectors

Regardless of the time of year, it's always a good idea to test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to make sure the batteries are still functioning. Remember that these detectors lose their effectiveness over time, so replace old and outdated products after five years of use.

## Feeling extra handy?

You can take additional precautions by inspecting all weather stripping around doors, and caulking around windows, for cracks or openings. If you find any problem areas, hire a professional to help or make the necessary repairs if you have the expertise.

And, if you have a wood-burning heating appliance or fireplace, have your chimney inspected and cleaned by a certified chimney inspector to reduce your risk of a fire.