

Preparing for Winter starts today.

The leaves and temperatures are starting to drop and that signals the time to start preparations for the winter. Let's take a moment and look at the seasonal maintenance that will keep us comfortable and safe through the cold season. The focus here is keeping the moisture and cold outside and the heat inside.

Our roofs and the exterior envelope are the first line of defense in maintaining the comfortability of our homes. Now is the time to get the roof looked at and ensure that there are no obvious signs of wear that could lead to leaks during the rainy season. As composition roofs age they shed granules exposing the fiberglass layers of the shingles. These areas are more prone to leaking and should be repaired by a qualified roofing contractor. Additionally, the granules can build up in the gutters causing blockages that lead to overflows, icicles and potential damage to the home. If you are comfortable on ladders and roofs you can perform these inspections yourself but hiring a professional may be preferred especially if you have a second story or a high-pitched roof.

The weatherstripping on windows and doors should be inspected and repaired as necessary. You can check your exterior door seals easily by shining a flashlight from the outside around the frame in the evening. Any light that you see inside is a place where the cold air will leak in, creating drafts and raising your heating bill. Checking that the weep holes in your windows are clear will help ensure that rainwater doesn't pond in the window frame or leak into the structure.

Another critical area that should be inspected is the caulking on the exterior of your home. Caulking at joints between siding and trim is intended to create a watertight seal that will keep the water out maintaining the integrity of the envelope and preventing moisture intrusion that can lead to dry rot. Replacing or augmenting the caulking is fairly simple and can most likely be done with a couple of tubes of acrylic or latex caulk available at any hardware store.

Take a walk around your home and look at the foundation. Low spots or depressions are areas where snow and rain can collect and either infiltrate the crawlspace or weaken the foundation itself. Look for cracks in the foundation that may indicate settling or other drainage issues that can lead to structural weakening. If you see any signs of this, you should contact a foundation/drainage contractor for a consultation. While the repairs can be simple it's best to have a professional opinion on this.

After the first rain, it's a good idea to go under the house (if you are not on a slab) and inspect the crawlspace and vapor barrier to ensure that there is no leakage or moisture intrusion. Moisture under the house can lead to the growth of mold which can adversely affect the health of your family. If there is any water you should contact a drainage specialist right away to correct the matter.

Finally, remember to drain your hoses, shut off the irrigation and blow out your sprinklers & water features before the hard frosts that are coming.

By undertaking these tasks you not only protect your investment but also create a more enjoyable home environment. If you have questions about inspections or any aspect of maintenance of your property, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

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