

# Tips to Prepare Your Home for Winter Weather



Ice, snow and freezing weather can be tough on your home, but there are plenty of easy ways to stay warm indoors and keep your house in good condition. Follow these DIY tips to prepare your home before the chill hits — you'll be more comfortable when the thermometer dips and save more on energy bills.

- ❑ **Change your filters:** Clogged and dirty filters are the number one reason contractors receive calls for failing heating systems. They cause the heater to work much harder and lead to early failure. Changing your filters regularly can prevent this, and if you have baseboard heating, make sure the coils are clean and clear of dust and debris.
- ❑ **Minimize air drafts:** Easy-to-use air sealing kits and insulating spray foam are available at most hardware stores. Use these to seal gaps around doors, light fixtures and plumbing under the sink or behind your washing machine. This will reduce drafts and keep warm air inside.
- ❑ **Remove window A/C units:** By leaving your air conditioning unit in your window during cold months, you'll allow heated air to escape, leaving you colder and leading to higher heating bills.
- ❑ **Check your fireplace:** Chimneys can be responsible for substantial heat loss. If you have an open fireplace in the home, make sure the damper is fully closed when it is not in use.
- ❑ **Close the curtains at night:** Even with highly efficient windows, the area around them can get cold. Insulated shades and cloth curtains create a buffer zone between you and the cold glass, leading to more comfortable temperatures indoors.
- ❑ **Open the curtains in the day:** Even in winter, opening your curtains allows your home to absorb plenty of free heat from the sun during the day. Plus, exposure to natural light has been shown to improve your mood!



**If you're not sure where to start or if you want help winter-proofing your home, [contact your utility](#) or [reach out to a local contractor](#) for support.**

# Staying Safe in a Power Outage



Preparing for a power outage, especially an extended one, is much like preparing for other disasters or emergency situations. Taking these steps beforehand can ensure that you have everything you need to make it through an outage safely.

- ❑ **Be safe:** When the lights don't turn on, many people look to generators and other fuel-powered devices. If you're using one of these, make sure there are working battery operated CO (carbon monoxide) monitors near every bedroom. Never run combustible equipment indoors and do not use your oven as a heater. Never plug a generator into an electrical outlet: This could cause backfeed, sending electricity out to the powerlines, which could result in serious line worker injury or death.
- ❑ **Make a plan:** Create a communication process to account for everyone in your household. (Two-way radios are great for this!) Neighbors can be a key resource — include them in your plan and make sure to check in on each other.
- ❑ **Forecast and prepare:** Winter storms are often forecasted. When one is predicted for your area, prepare accordingly:
  - ❑ Make sure your vehicle's tank or battery is full.
  - ❑ Have extra jugs of potable water and non-perishable food items.
  - ❑ Make sure you have enough prescription medications to last the storm.
  - ❑ Conserve your phone's battery power throughout the event and make sure external battery packs are charged.
  - ❑ Have spare batteries on hand for flashlights, lamps and other devices
  - ❑ Layer up, stay dry and stick together. Set up a tent indoors, sleep and gather near each other to retain heat.
  - ❑ Prep extra seasoned wood if you have a fireplace or woodstove.
  - ❑ Prepare for your pets, too.
  - ❑ Have activities prepared, especially if you have children.
- ❑ **Know what your resources can handle:** It's likely that only a small portion of your home will need to be heated, such as the living room. Keep this in mind if you plan to purchase or set up a generator.
- ❑ **Winterize your home ahead of time:** Whether you are following the DIY tips on the other side of this flyer or having a contractor insulate and air seal your home, sooner is better. You'll be more comfortable and lower your bills right away, and be better prepared for the next outage.
- ❑ **Educate:** Many communities have a disaster preparedness team. Check to see what resources are available in your area, then share that information with neighbors and friends.