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Fall Home Maintenance

- Check for Drafts**
Move a lighted candle along the edges of windows, doors, and moldings; if the flame flickers, there's probably a draft. Mark the areas with painters' tape and return to replace seals as needed. On the outside of your home, inspect the siding and shingles for cracks and holes and repair as necessary.

- Check Home Safety Devices**
Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, recharge fire extinguishers, and test for radon.

- Clean and Install Storm Windows and Doors**

- Clean Gutters**

- Clean Humidifiers**
Replace old filters. Soak interiors with undistilled white vinegar and scrub with a soft-bristle brush.

- Compost Autumn Leaves**
Start your own compost pile with fall leaves and other garden debris. The best compost contains two or three parts "brown," or carbon-rich matter (leaves, pine needles, sawdust, shredded newspaper), to one part "green," or nitrogen-rich matter (grass clippings, vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds, eggshells). You can also contact your town hall to find out if your area's sanitation department collects leaves to compost.

- Disinfect Flowerpots**
Soak in a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water, scrub with a stiff brush, and dry thoroughly before storing.

- Have Your Chimney Inspected and Cleaned by a Chimney Sweep
- Have Your Furnace Inspected
Hire a professional to check for leaks, replace filters, and condition the system.
- Inspect Trees
Now that the branches are bare, check for limbs that interfere with power lines or come too close to the roof.
- Order Firewood
- Organize the Shed
Remove any liquids that will freeze in the winter, transfer fertilizer boxed in cardboard to metal or plastic containers, and move snow- and ice-removal equipment to the front for easy access.
- Prepare Flowers
Deadhead annuals and perennials regularly to groom and promote blooming. Wrap roses and other fragile shrubs with burlap; after the soil freezes, mulch garden beds to prevent the soil from heaving.
- Remove Window Air-Conditioning Units
Clean filters, and drain the units of water before storing them.
- Service Snow Blower; Purchase Gasoline
- Service Sprinklers
Have your system drained and serviced by a professional, and flag any heads near driveways or walkways to prevent damage during snow removal.
- Take Down Outdoor Clothesline
- Turn Off Faucets and Roll Hoses; Store for the Season