

# your home

NOV/DEC 2018

*Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers*



As winter is fast approaching, the professionals at HomeTeam Inspection Service provide homeowners with the following tips to ensure their homes are well prepared and more energy-efficient throughout the coming months.

- ➔ Inspect around windows and doors for cracks and seal any openings with caulk or weather stripping to prevent air and water from getting into your home.
- ➔ Have a professional evaluate the amount of insulation in your home to ensure it is properly insulated and will keep your energy costs down.

- ➔ Replace batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to make sure they're working properly.
- ➔ Visibly check the fireplace opening for loose or missing bricks and have screens in place to protect against any embers that may escape.
- ➔ Look for raised, loose or missing roof shingles and replace them, if needed, to prevent water from getting in and creating leaks.
- ➔ Remove hoses from outside spigots and store them during the winter months.
- ➔ Clean debris from gutters to prevent water from collecting and freezing.
- ➔ Make sure all downspouts are pointed away from the foundation.
- ➔ Have the HVAC units inspected and change furnace filters monthly for cleaner indoor air and maximum energy efficiency.
- ➔ Program thermostats to lower temperatures while at work or sleeping.

These simple steps can help homeowners maintain the overall health and safety of their home during the winter season.

This article was provided by HomeTeam Inspection Service. For more information, go to [hometeam.com](http://hometeam.com).



## WHILE YOU'RE AWAY...

The holidays are an exciting time, especially if you plan on traveling. Whether you're visiting family or going somewhere warm for the winter, it's important to take security precautions when leaving your home unattended. The following are steps you can take to deter potential burglars from making your home a target this season:

**Consider an upgrade.** Locking your doors and windows is a good start, but if you don't yet have a home security system, consider getting one. There are a variety of smart options out there now, from comprehensive systems to individual

features, such as the Ring Video Doorbell, which detects motion and provides a view of your front door on your smartphone.

**Put lights on a timer.** A house that is constantly dark is a good sign to burglars that no one is home. Set indoor and patio lights on automatic timers. There are timers and smart light bulbs you can control via your smartphone, like the Philips Hue.

**Combat the elements.** If you live in an area where it snows during the winter months, hire someone to shovel and clear the sidewalks while you're gone. This will keep snow from piling up if any falls while

you're away, which can fool potential thieves and make shoveling a less daunting task when you return.

**Hold your mail.** Another obvious sign that no one is home is when newspapers, packages and other mail pile up in your mailbox or at the front door. Put a hold on your mail or ask a neighbor to pick it up and keep it until you return from vacation. If you expect large packages to be delivered while you're gone, consider having them sent to the store or an Amazon Locker.

**Put social media on pause.** You may want to post about your vacation plans or photos on social media, but wait until you're back home. Letting everyone know before or during your travels is also letting them know that your house is empty.



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## BABY, IT'S **sold** OUTSIDE

↙ In many states, winter brings inclement weather and overall dreariness to the landscape. Winter is also considered the "slow" season for the real estate industry, as people may not be moving and selling quite as often as during the spring and summer months.

However, buyers during the off-season are often serious and want to move in as quickly as possible, so it can still be a good time to sell. Here are five tips for getting your home in shape and making it as appealing as possible during the winter months:

- 1. Light it up.** If it's gray and dreary outside, make your home as bright as you can by opening blinds, shutters and drapes to let in as much natural light as possible. Turn on every light in the house as well, including closet lights and desktop lamps.
- 2. Stay warm.** Keep your home at a comfortable temperature, and try to warm it up before buyers walk through, so the HVAC doesn't kick on and create excess noise. If you have a fireplace, light it—just be sure to place a screen in front of it and tend to it regularly.
- 3. Create ambiance.** A warm and cozy atmosphere is more than just temperature. Make buyers feel welcome by playing soft music, such as classical, light jazz or non-religious holiday music if it's that time of the year. Offer cups of hot apple cider or cocoa as refreshments. Give the impression that every room is move-in ready by staging them with a specific mood in mind—set the dining room table for a romantic dinner or set up a spa-like experience in the master bathroom.
- 4. Keep a clear path.** Shovel snow off of the walkway and sidewalk—even while snow is falling—to make sure there's always a clear path to your home for potential buyers. Also, consider shoveling a path from the street to the sidewalk to ensure they don't have to dig their way through snowdrifts. Scrape and salt the paths for maximum safety.
- 5. Be prepared.** If you know you'll be listing your home during winter, take photos of your home beforehand, so buyers know what the light and landscaping look like in summertime.

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