

HOME "TO DO" LIST BY MONTH

JULY: Check air conditioner condensation tubing to ensure water is flowing freely; clean with a bleach and water solution and clear with a wet/dry vac. Hose off dirt and leaves from the air conditioner coils outside to maximize efficiency. Trim tree and bush branches away from exterior siding and the roof. Be careful around power lines. Open and close water cutoff valves to sinks and toilets to keep them from sticking. Flush water heater bi-annually, or as needed.

AUGUST: Call to schedule the furnace contractor for a fall checkup. Call the propane company to fill the propane tank before cool weather. Add a programmable thermostat to save energy. Replace light bulbs with the compact fluorescents. Verify that all door and window locks are in good working order. Add motion sensor floodlights to the exterior of your home. Set interior lights on timers when departing on vacation. Leave draperies and blinds in their normal positions in your absence.

SEPTEMBER: Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries. Caulk windows and doors; use a paintable caulk if painting afterwards. Be sure the weep holes in storm windows are clear to eliminate water retention. Have the chimney cleaned in wood burning fireplaces. Be sure damper is working properly. Weatherstrip doors and pull down attic stairs if needed. Add new sweeps to the bottom of doors to prevent air infiltration.

OCTOBER: Reverse ceiling fans again; they should blow upward to push warm air across the ceiling and down the walls. Clean the fan blades. Clean gutters and be sure the elbows of the downspouts are clear of leaves and debris so water can flow freely. Install gutter guard to minimize maintenance in the future. Check the attic for adequate insulation and verify that the insulation isn't blocking soffit vents for proper air circulation. Drain and winterize irrigation system in the yard. Seal holes in foundation and around utility holes to prevent pest infestation into your home. Be sure the garage door fits snuggly to prevent rodents from wintering in your garage.

NOVEMBER: Be sure the well cover is tightly sealed to prevent pipes from freezing. Check roof shingles with binoculars; replace or repair any missing or damaged shingles. Check fire extinguishers to be sure they are properly charged. Develop and practice a family fire escape plan. Check the condition of extension cords for wear and tear; use cords for exterior use only on outdoor holiday decorations. Don't overload extension cords with too many strands of lights. Clean and remove dead bugs from light fixtures. Clean exterior lamps and light fixtures and make sure all bulbs are working.

DECEMBER: Discard old medications and keep household chemicals away from children. Have the poison hotline phone number near the phone. The national hotline number is: 1-800-222-1222, which connects callers to local centers. Make sure everyone knows the location of the main water shutoff and that access is kept clear. Be sure a neighbor also knows where it is. Clean the grit and mineral buildup in showerheads and faucet aerators. Keep walks and driveways clear of ice and snow to prevent injury.

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