



The days are getting noticeably shorter, and maybe there's a nip in the air – sure signs that fall is on its way. Now is the perfect time to get your home in shape before winter rolls in, while the weather is still pleasant enough for spending time outdoors.

Seal it up: Caulk and seal around exterior door and window frames. Look for gaps where pipes or wiring enter the home and caulk those as well. Not only does heat escape from these openings, but water can enter and may eventually cause mold problems and even structural damage.

Look up: Check the roof for missing or damaged shingles. Winter weather can cause serious damage to a vulnerable roof, leading to a greater chance of further damage inside the home. Although you should always have a qualified professional inspect and repair the roof, you can do a preliminary survey from the ground using binoculars.

Clear it out: Clear gutters and eaves troughs of leaves, sticks, and other debris. Consider installing leaf guards if your gutters can accommodate them – they are real time savers and can prevent damage from clogged gutters. Check the seams between sections of gutter, as well as between the gutter and downspouts, and make any necessary adjustments or repairs.

No hose: In climates with freezing weather, drain garden hoses and store them indoors to protect them from the elements. Shut off outdoor faucets and make sure exterior pipes are drained of water. Faucets and pipes can easily freeze and burst, causing leaks and potentially serious water damage.

Warm up time: Have the furnace inspected to ensure it's safe and in good working order. Most utility companies will provide basic inspections at no charge, but there can often be a long waiting list come fall and winter. Replace disposable furnace air filters or clean the permanent type according to the manufacturer's instructions. Using a clean filter will help the furnace run more efficiently, saving you money and energy.

Light that fire: If you enjoy the crackle of a wood-burning fireplace on a chilly fall evening, have the firebox and chimney professionally cleaned before lighting a fire this season. Creosote, a byproduct of wood burning, can build up to dangerous levels and cause a serious chimney fire if not removed.

Happy Fall to you from everyone at Pillar To Post Home Inspectors.