

Winter Checklist

Rainwater Protection

- Make sure the ground around the foundation slopes one inch for every foot as you move away from the foundation.
- Make sure concrete patios, walks, and driveways slope away from foundation.
- Keep gutters clean at all times. It is better to clean them several times rather than waiting until the end of the leaf season.
- When it is raining, go outside and using binoculars, inspect your roof and gutters.
- Make sure the water is not coming down behind the gutters and that the gutters are properly sloped toward the downspouts. Check that all support brackets and nails are securely in place. Downspouts should discharge water ten to fifteen feet from the foundation.
- If there are any signs of a leak or damaged shingles or flashing, have the roof checked.
- Have slate roofs professionally inspected every 2 to 3 years.
- Make sure basement stairwell drains are clear of debris.
- Make sure the rims of your window wells are high enough to prevent surface water from flowing into them. Install covers over any window wells exposed to the rain.
- Test your basement sump pump.
- If you have a wet basement, consider having it looked at by a professional.
- Make sure all exterior drains are free of debris.

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Exterior

- Check the condition of the mortar joints in the foundation. Repair any cracks and crumbling mortar before more extensive damage occurs.
- Check the condition of exterior paint. It is best to repaint before cracking and peeling begins.
- Check for rotted wood. Pay special attention to any wood close to the ground.
- Check for sawdust and other signs of insect infestation.
- Check for gaps around pipes and wires that go through exterior walls. Caulk so that no air can leak in or out.
- Turn off the interior cut-off valve for each outdoor faucet and then open the outdoor faucet so that no water can freeze in the pipe that connects the two.
- Make sure your house number is well lit and clearly readable from the street.
- Check all hand rails inside and out to make sure they are strong enough to prevent a fall and extend far enough to provide ample support.
- Make sure all entrances are lit by lights connected to motion detectors.
- If you have the older type removable wooden storm windows, make arrangements to have them re-installed.
- Make sure combination storms are properly positioned.
- Replace or repair any broken window locks or latches.
- Caulk around window frames.
- Check the condition of the putty around the window panes. If chunks are falling off, it's time to repair. If the windows are single pane or in bad shape, it may be more cost effective to replace the entire window with a modern, energy efficient window.
- Repair any cracked or broken window panes, or damaged screens.
- Make sure all windows open and shut properly.

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230 North Main Street, Suite 4 / Rutland, VT 05701-2416

O: 802.747.4535 / criterium-lalancette-dudka.com



Insulation

- Attic insulation should be at least R30. R-38 is preferable.
- Make sure the crawl space is properly insulated. Close up any crawl space vents for the winter.
- Consider insulating your basement walls with closed cell foam insulation. Besides saving you heating dollars, it can reduce common moisture problems caused by condensation.
- If at all possible, make sure the exterior walls are insulated to R11.
- Insulate any pipes and heating ducts that run through cold unheated crawl spaces or attics.

Attic Ventilation

- Attic insulation should not cover ventilation in the eaves (also called soffits or overhangs). This helps prevent winter ice dams.
- Ridge and soffit vents should be free of debris.
- Make sure bird and rodent screens for attic vents are in good shape.

Heating

- Make sure all exhaust vents for gas appliances are free of obstructions. Mark the location on the exterior so you will remember to keep them clear of snow throughout the winter.
- Test your heating system before the weather gets very cold.
- Have your heating system serviced by a professional.
- Replace or clean your furnace air filters.
- Clean ductwork to the extent possible.
- Check the condition of baseboard convectors.

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