



## Newsletter

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### Earn \$100 By Referring New Tenants

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a sample \$100 Rent coupon that you can earn by referring prospective tenants to us. All you need to do is have the prospective tenant call our office at 359-0203 and tell us that you referred them. Once the new tenant has signed a new lease with our company, we will send you a \$100 coupon that you can use at any time during your tenancy. There is no limitation to the number of \$100 coupons that you can earn or use at one time. In these tough economic times this is great way for you to supplement your income and help reduce your expenses!



### Baking soda, vinegar remain kings of clean!

People rather casually pour an astounding amount of toxic chemicals and bleach down the bathroom and kitchen drains these days, and spend an enormous amount of money for the "privilege" of doing so. Most of it is a waste of money and a plague on the planet.

Books have been written on the countless helpful applications of baking soda and white vinegar. But we will concentrate on a few specific areas.

- **Tub and shower cleaning:** Use baking soda (powder) and a dampened sponge or soft rag to clean sinks, tubs and shower walls without damaging porcelain or fiberglass surfaces. It will not scrub off serious mineral deposits, but often, dampening deposits with undiluted vinegar will dissolve or

loosen them. Regular cleaning of tubs, sinks and bathroom faucets and fixtures with baking soda, followed by rinsing and a wipe-down with a soft, absorbent towel or rag before droplets have a chance to evaporate, will eliminate the buildup of mineral deposits.

- **Window and mirror cleaning:** Regardless of what they tell you on TV, there is no better or cheaper method of cleaning windows and mirrors than a solution of white vinegar and water (about 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water) and crumpled newspaper. Spray the solution on the glass, scrub it with one side of the wad of newspaper,

and polish it dry with the other side. That's it!

- **Stains on carpet:** This is a little more complex because the exact cause of the stain dictates how to remove it. However, here is a tip for dealing with pet urine stains. Sprinkle dry baking soda on the area as soon as the accident is discovered. Work it into the carpet with a stiff brush, allow it to dry, and vacuum. Then scrub the area with a little dishwashing liquid mixed with water, using a brush or a dampened sponge or rag. Dab the area with a dry rag to absorb excess moisture, but don't rinse it. With cats, in particular, the slight odor of dishwashing liquid will discourage them from returning to the same spot repeatedly.

### Maintenance Tip:

#### Mice Prevention Measures

- Thoroughly clean any spilled food, garbage, pet food or grain.
- Remove all trash and rubbish near your home.
- Keep garbage in tightly closed cans or containers
- Keep all outside doors, windows and vents snugly closed at night.
- Keep plants and shrubs trimmed back at least 12 in. from the outer surface of the House.

# Smart Ways to stay warm this winter

Maybe Jack Frost isn't on the pumpkin yet. But there's no getting around it.

Winter and the heating season are just around the corner.

You're definitely not looking forward to the sky-high energy bills that soon will start appearing in your mailbox. And you hate the idea of being an energy hog, anyway.

Surprisingly, it doesn't take a major investment to make a major difference. Rather, a few smart changes here and there can yield some good results in the home heating arena.

Following is a rundown of options to consider:

## Worthwhile winterizing:

That cold spot under the door might cost more than you think. Experts estimate about 15% of the energy you use for heating your home goes toward warming the air that leaks through cracks.

Lower that figure by sealing leaks around electric switches and outlets, installing door sweeps and weather stripping around windows and doors. If a sweep won't fit in the space between your door and floor, block the crack with a padded strip.

If you're pondering a larger investment, consider replacing windows with "high-E" glass, which has a greater R-value or resistance to heat flow than regular glass.

## Heavenly humidity:

If you're tired of putting tea kettles filled with water on the stove to take the dryness out of the air, this may be the year to consider a humidifier.

Those who swear by them say the living and breathing is easier in a room filled with clean, safe water vapor. Humidity also tends to ward off the winter chill that's often present indoors even when the heat's turned up.

There are humidifiers to fit every budget and space, ranging from portable models to whole house humidifiers that don't have to be refilled manually. Your heating and cooling contractor might offer suggestions on brands and models that are right for your home.

## Warm up to fireplaces:

They can create an atmosphere that's either homey or romantic. They can greatly boost a home's value. And, they can give a room a much needed focal point.

Thus, it's no wonder home owners hold fireplaces near and dear even in these high-tech times.

And, in return, fireplaces just keep getting better. You now, for example, can choose between natural wood burning or gas burning fireplaces, and can boost your fireplace's energy output and efficiency by adding an insert.

If you're lucky enough to already own a fireplace, take pains to have your chimney checked by a qualified chimney sweep before and after the heating season.

## Important insulation:

You throw an extra quilt on the bed during the winter. Why

not do the same for your home?

Many heating experts say the addition of insulation oftentimes in the attic is a good way to lower heating costs.

You can't judge insulation on appearance alone. Rather, insulation efficiency is measured in terms of its resistance to heat flow, which is expressed as an R-value.

The higher the R-value, the more effective the insulation.

Before you start piling on the padding, find out how much insulation is already in your home and the type of insulation you'll need to improve the situation. Look to your heating contractor or utility company for facts and figures related to your area.

## Experience a setback:

It's a constant battle. Someone turns the heat up, then someone turns it down. There's no method to the madness and you suspect there's a price to pay for all the raises and falls in indoor temperature. A setback thermostat may be able to take away the headache.

These smart little devices can be programmed for maximum efficiency; they'll switch to a lower setting at night and during times in the day when no one is home, then back up during the height of family activity.

You rarely need to fiddle with the controls unless you want to override the program when daily schedule differs dramatically from the norm.

## Energy efficiency outside:

Who says energy efficiency begins inside? The same kind of thinking should be applied to the great outdoors.

Smart landscaping, for instance, can really make a difference in heat loss and gain.

Practical ideas range from using deciduous trees as living sunscreens that shade in the summer, then shed their leaves when cool weather rolls around so that the winter sun can shine right in, to planting shrubs and hedges in strategic spots to block the chilly winter wind.

Professional landscaper, do-it-yourself books and home gardening centers can offer additional suggestions.

Another idea: Maintenance-free siding with insulation underneath also may help trim your energy bill.

Because a layer of insulation on the exterior surface of the wall is more effective than inside of the wall, say experts, the house stays cooler in the summer, warmer in the winter.

## SECRETS OF SAFE GARAGING

If you think keeping your car garaged guarantees its safety, think again. The number of claims for damage in home garages is shocking.

- **Keep the area above and around your car clear.** Rakes, shovels, tools, bikes, etc. can all damage a car if they fall.
- **Install a smoke detector** – especially if the furnace is in your garage.
- **Never store flammables near a vehicle.** Keep all such items – including lawn mowers, snow-blowers and other gas-powered equipment, paint and solvents – at least 5 feet away from a car.
- **Keep car windows closed.** We regularly receive claims for damage from raccoons, squirrels, mice and even household pets that get inside a car.
- **Keep the car covered to guard against scratches.** Use a thick cover to prevent claw marks from animals that may get into the garage.
- **Get proper insurance.** Homeowner's insurance does not cover a garaged car – even a collectible car that is not driven.
- **Think like a thief.** Keep your garage locked, cover windows, and set the car alarm. Consider an alarm for the garage.

# Home Winterization Checklist



## Exterior:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Check chimneys, deteriorated chimney caps and loose mortar.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Check flashing around roof stacks, vents, skylights, chimneys, for possible sources of leaks.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Check for damaged, loose or missing shingles.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Check for leaking, misaligned or damaged gutters, downspouts and gutter guards.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Check siding and trim for damage, looseness and decay.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Check exterior lighting.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Cut back tree limbs growing on or over roof.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Clean around heating and cooling equipment, remove leaves, dust and overgrown shrubbery. Be sure power is off.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Drain exterior water lines, howe bibbs, sprin-

klers and well pumps.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Wrap exposed water lines and drains with insulation and close crawl vents.

## Interior:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Check caulking for decay around doors and windows and recaulk as needed.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Check glazing around windows.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Check all weather-stripping and winterize where needed.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Check sinks, faucets, house traps and valves for leaks.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Draw off sediment in water heaters per manufacturer's instructions and insulate.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Check for any exposed wiring, use of excessive extension cords or broken and missing outlet covers.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Check bathroom tile joints, tub grouting and caulking.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Have furnaces and/or heating equipment cleaned and serviced for greater efficiency of operation, maintenance check and tune-up.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Check all door and window locks and security systems.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Check for any potential safety hazards in/outside.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Check operation of smoke detectors.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ Place a fire extinguisher in the kitchen.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Check for any damages caused by pets.