

# TIPS TO GET YOUR HOUSE READY FOR WINTER

With winter fast approaching, autumn is the best time to start preparing your house for the colder months. South Australia, indeed many parts of Australia, haven't seen rainfall levels like this in many years which may have caused you to forget the damage a long, cold and wet winter can do to your house if your not prepared. We have devised a 'check-list' to help you prepare.



## INSIDE

- **Heavy curtains** - Up to 40 per cent of the heat escaping from your home in winter is from uncovered windows. Use heavy, lined curtains that extend below the window frame to insulate the window and keep warmth in.
- **Temperature control** - If you heat the room you are using to 20-22 degrees this will be comfortable in addition to keeping your electricity use down.
- **Rooms not in use** - Close off any rooms that are not in use.
- **Sunshine** - Let the sunshine in. If you have north facing windows, open up the curtains to let the sun heat up your house.
- **Window duties** - Be sure to replace or repair any broken window locks or latches. While doing this make sure all windows open and close properly, in case of fire.
- **Safety** - Make sure all smoke detectors are working with fresh batteries.
  - Test your security alarm especially if you have detectors on windows.
  - Make sure all external entrances are lit by lights connected to motion sensors.
- **Go shopping** - It's a good idea to have spare batteries, torches, matches and candles in the house in case of black-outs.

## OUTSIDE

It is very important to consider what outdoor jobs should be done on which days. Ensure all ladder jobs are complete on a day when the weather is nice and the ground is dry.

- **Insulation** - A well insulated house can use as much as 45 per cent less energy than a house without insulation! Consider installing ceiling insulation or topping up old thinning insulation.
- **Seal it up** - Cold air entering from cracks and gaps can account for 15 to 25 per cent of heat loss in your home! Use weather stripping around doors and windows, gap filler for cracks in walls or a simple door snake will help.
- **Get your hands dirty** - Autumn brings colour to any garden but it also brings leaf foliage in gutters. Clear debris and check for rust and blockages, which can cause flooding. It is best to do this a few times during Autumn. Consider replacing old guttering sooner rather than later because it can result in damage inside your house.
- **Mortar joints** - Check on the exterior of the house for any signs of movement.
- **Piping Hot** - Insulate external hot water pipes with lagging (insulation tape) to reduce heat loss from the hot water tank to the taps.
- **Hot Air** - Get your heater serviced professionally to ensure it runs efficiently. Keep heaters free of dust and clean filters regularly.
- **Chimney Sweep** - If you have open fires throughout your house be sure to have them inspected and cleaned by a professional.
- **Pool** - Prepare your pool for the cold. Test chlorine levels, scrub walls and floors, vacuum the entire pool and empty the pump's lint basket, clean the filter and lastly add a secure pool cover to keep debris out.
- **Open the gate** - Make sure all gates open and close properly before you are caught in the rain.
- **Garden duties** - Autumn is the best time to fertilise your lawn to ensure it remains healthy during the colder months. Rake up fallen leaves and debris to prevent suffocation and bare spots on your lawn.
  - Prune shrubs and trim back tree branches away from the house and have dead branches or trees removed.