



It's official, summer is over and cool weather is on the way. Here are a few seasonal maintenance tips and reminders from Winchester Homes to help you get the most out of your new home.

## Heat

During the first cold days of fall, heating contractors are overwhelmed with service calls, resulting in slower response times. Don't get left out in the cold. Make sure to do a test run before the first frost to make sure everything is working properly.

When you first turn on your heat, you may experience a slight odor—this is normal and should disappear quickly. After your one-year warranty has expired, you may want to have your furnace serviced before the fall by an HVAC specialist.

Remember to change or clean your system's air filter monthly. It only takes a minute and it can save you a bundle on heating costs, as a clogged filter will slow airflow and cause cold spots in your home.

If you have a permanent, washable, removable filter, you should clean it monthly. Turn off your unit, use only water to clean the filter, then tap it and allow to air dry. Do not use soaps or detergents on the filter.

If you have an electronic air cleaner, read the manufacturer's literature and follow all instructions for efficient operation and maintenance of your system (See Homeowners Guide).

## Humidifiers

Operate a humidifier only when heating your home. Do not operate a humidifier while using air conditioning. The humidifier should be adjusted to the manufacturer's recommended settings and suggested timetable. It's a homeowner's responsibility to monitor and maintain appropriate moisture levels in the home, as excessive moisture can lead to mold and mildew. The humidifier medium should be changed every fall. You can find one at a hardware or specialty store or from an HVAC specialist.

## Rain Gutters

**Rain Gutters:** Periodically check gutters and remove leaves and debris to avoid a clogged gutter. (It's common to see small amounts of water standing in the gutters after a rain (See Homeowners Guide).

## Caulking

As routine maintenance, you should inspect the inside and outside of your home twice a year to check the caulking for drying, shrinkage, and/or settlement cracking and make any needed repairs (See Homeowners Guide).

## Outside Faucets

Follow these steps to winterize your outside hose bibs. Reverse these steps when the temperatures rise above freezing in the spring (See Homeowners Guide).

1. Inside, shut off all individual hose bib water supply valves.
2. Outside, remove any garden hoses, and open bibs. Leave hose bib open all winter.
3. Inside, return to individual hose bib water supply valves and remove bleeder caps. Keep in safe place for easy retrieval in spring.

## Smoke and CO Detectors

Your detectors are wired into the electrical system of your home and also have a nine-volt battery back-up. If you occasionally hear a low-volume, single beep (not the regular alarm sound), the battery requires replacement. Refer to the owner's manual for specifics on replacing batteries. Do not rely on the electrical system to power your detectors; you must have fresh batteries in your detectors at all times. Many fire departments recommend changing batteries when you set your clocks in the spring and the fall.

## Concrete

During the winter months, salt, chemical solutions and other de-icers can cause damage to exposed surfaces. Without regular cleanings, sidewalks and walkways may begin to crack over time. Also, residues that build up on the undercarriage of your car will drip onto your driveway and garage, which may result in pitting or scaling. Minimize concrete damage by taking the proper precautions:

- Check drainage to ensure that water or salt is not trapped on the concrete surface by grass, landscaping or other obstructions along the driveway edges.
- Clean exposed concrete surfaces as soon as possible after ice and snow have been removed from the streets and salt has been removed from your car.
- Apply a sealer to exposed concrete surfaces twice each year, once just before cold weather and again in April or May, after a thorough cleaning of the surfaces (See Homeowners Guide).

Please let us know how we can be of any further service and thank you again for choosing Winchester Homes.



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