

# Now is the time to plan for winter

For most homeowners, the chores around a house are never done. Fortunately, for many household maintenance and improvement projects, there also seems to be an appropriate season to undertake them.

As the weather gets crisper outside, attention should focus on winterizing a house. While many homeowners automatically think of outdoor activities like replacing screens with storm windows and shutting off the water outside, it's even more important to think about winterizing a house on the inside as well.

If time gets short on you this season, consider hiring a professional insulation contractor. These contractors are experts at weatherizing houses and can undertake projects from adding an extra layer of insulation in an attic to insulating sidewalls and crawl spaces.

Insulation contractors can be located in the Yellow Pages, by calling friends and neighbors who may have had work done on their houses or by calling the local contractor's association in your town. An insulation contractor will then come out to your house, conduct an energy audit and suggest ways to winterize your house to make it more comfortable and efficient when the true cold hits.

If your contractor suggests an extra layer of fiber glass insulation to bring your house's attic up to today's energy standards, ask about the highest quality and safest products and systems on the market today. Contractors might mention Insul Safe III Blown-In Fiber Glass Insulation, a pure white material that feels and looks like cotton. It is highly thermally efficient, noncombustible and noncorrosive for the life of your house.

Another unique insulating method on the market today is the Blown-In Blanket System or B.I.B.S. A B.I.B.S. is ideal for insulating sidewalls in a house you are constructing or renovating. It involves applying a netting to the wall cavity, and mixing a small amount of adhesive into a blown-in insulation, which helps the material completely fill the cavity, even around pipes and wires.

Besides insulating, an insulation contractor can handle any number of winterizing projects including: Caulking

One of the best means for sealing a house against drafts. Caulking can be applied to do the most thorough job around stationary parts of window and door frames, around wall and roof vents, skylights and chimneys and where plumbing or electric wiring enters your house.

## Weatherstripping

Drafty windows rob heat from houses. One of the most effective means for preventing this is sealing them with weatherstripping. This can involve channel stripping, which is most popular for double-hung windows, foam-filled or hollow vinyl tubing. Drafty doors can cause as much heat loss as several drafty windows. Insulation contractors can handle this project as well. The process normally involves sealing the sides and tops of the door and then sealing the bottom. Foam-edged wooden strips are the most popular forms of weatherstripping products available today.

## Preparing Heating Systems for Winter

Inspect and service your system annually for safety and efficiency reasons. Some insulation contractors also specialize in this; otherwise, call a qualified heating technician. An inspection should include: checking for air leaks; cleaning and checking the filter system; combustion air blower and burner motor; examining the firing system; and adjusting the draft regulator.

For more information on hiring an insulation contractor or on installing blown-in insulation, write to the CertainTeed Home Institute, P.O. Box 660, Valley Forge, PA 19482 or call 1-800-782-5777.

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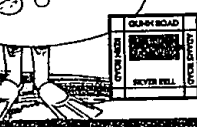
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