

Home winter maintenance

When temperatures drop, safeguard your home against freezing conditions. Read our guide for advice on protecting your home during the winter season.

Top tips for making your home winter-ready

Prepare your home for the cold with small maintenance work to avoid expensive repairs.

- ✓ Check the insulation in your walls and loft. An estimated one-third of all heat escapes through your home's walls, so make sure they're insulated well to save you money and keep warm.
- ✓ If you have a fireplace, make sure it's in good condition and arrange an inspection to check for blockages. This can help prevent unwanted draughts, whilst debris in chimneys can become a fire hazard.
- ✓ Prevent draughts: Seal up gaps in windows and doors with weather stripping or caulk to stop air coming in and causing draughts. Think about double glazing your windows or replacing older doors with new ones if needed.



Outside

In your garden, driveway, and around your home's exterior, there are some simple steps you can take to protect against snow, ice, and rain damage. Just remember, it's always a good idea to get professionals in for any tricky or dangerous jobs you shouldn't tackle by yourself.

- ✓ Trim back overgrown branches: Dead branches and excess foliage from hedges can fall into gutters and cause blockages. Snow can accumulate on them as well, leading to snapping branches that might fall and cause damage. Pruning them can help prevent these issues.
- ✓ Keep gutters and drains clear: Blocked gutters and drains can cause water to back up, potentially running down your house walls or leaking through the roof. If the water freezes, the extra weight can strain plastic gutters and drainpipes, leading to breakage. Make it a habit to clear them regularly during the winter months.
- ✓ Inspect and repair the roof: Make sure any aerials and satellites are securely fastened, particularly when strong winds are expected.



Stop frozen pipes from bursting and damaging your home

Freezing conditions can put the pipes in your home at risk of freezing and bursting. This can cause expensive damages, and lead to a cold house.

To stop this from happening:

- **Keep air circulating in your home:** Opening your loft hatch occasionally allows warm air to circulate around pipes in your loft.
- **Maintain a low heat setting to prevent freezing:** Consider installing a frost protection thermostat if possible.
- **Install new washers to dripping taps:** This can prevent the chance of water freezing and creating a block in the pipe.

Top tips for energy saving in cold weather conditions

- Use a timer on your boiler, so your heating is only turned up when you're at home.
- Make the switch to long lasting, energy efficient LED light bulbs.
- Check your freezer and fridge settings are at recommended temperatures for maximum efficiency and food safety.
- Wash clothes at 30°C instead of 40°C to save money on electricity and be more environmentally friendly.



Reminder

If things do go wrong this winter, check if you have home emergency cover included in your home insurance plan to get things sorted quickly.