

Angie's list[®]
WINTER MAINTENANCE
GUIDE
EXTERIOR PROJECTS





exterior projects

gutters

Ever see icicles hanging from gutters? They form from snow and ice that thaws and drains from the roof but refreezes when it reaches the gutters. Minimize the risk of gutter damage from ice dams by [having them cleaned](#) before snow arrives. Attempting to clear frozen gutters can pose a safety risk to you and create further damage. Consult with a reputable pro to discuss your options for treating frozen gutters.

roofing

There are a couple of keys to keeping your home free of water from melting snow or ice build-up on your roof: First, it's important to have a roof that's structurally sound and isn't missing shingles. Next, it's critical to ensure your home's attic is properly insulated from the rest of the house. Heat trapped in the attic can melt the snow on the roof, which leads to ice damming.

garage

Potentially the most dangerous moving object in the home, the garage door deserves an annual inspection from a professional. This is especially important for homeowners in cold-weather climates, where garage door springs to wear out faster. Many professionals will do an [inspection and tune-up for around \\$100](#). One DIY tip is to apply a lubricant like petroleum jelly to the bottom of the door seal to help prevent it from sticking to the ground in freezing temperatures.

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EXTERIOR PROJECTS

lawn care

GET OUT THE RAKE

Take advantage of mild weather to rake any remaining leaves to help keep grass healthy and prevent mold growth. Consult with a highly rated [landscaping specialist](#) on which plants in your garden to cut back. Experts also recommend trimming back any weakened tree branches and deadwood that may not withstand the ice. Pruning can also promote new growth in the spring. Consult a professional arborist, who has the training to understand proper pruning techniques for different trees and how to best care for your trees.

TEND TO PLANTS, TREES

Protect newly planted trees, shrubs and perennials with a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch. Make sure the ground is frozen before adding mulch. If not it may retain heat, which could encourage the plant to develop top growth. This growth will likely be too fragile for winter temperatures and could damage or kill the plant. Consider wrapping new or smaller trees with a suitable commercial tree wrap.

WINTER STORAGE

Secure and store any lawn decorations that could be damaged by the elements, planter pots that are susceptible to breakage from the cold, as well as lawn equipment. Be sure to run the lawn mower until it's empty of fuel, or risk carburetor damage.

PUT AWAY HOSES

Remove hoses from outside spigots, drain and store for the winter, and turn off the water connection at the spigots. Failure to do so could lead to a burst pipe at the spigot when temperatures drop below freezing.

WATER FEATURES

Empty and store water garden features like wall fountains, urns and other small containers. With heavier fountains, consider turning them upside down or covering with a tarp to keep the water out. For ponds with fish, it's important to keep the water from freezing over completely. Experts recommend creating a basketball-sized hole to allow them access to oxygen.

SHUT DOWN SPRINKLER

Have your lawn irrigation system winterized, which typically costs between \$65 and \$85 but can save you big in [repairs to a damaged system](#). Winterization involves having a professional use an air compressor to clear out water from underground pipelines. Often, those pipes are made from rigid PVC plastic, which can shatter from expanding and contracting during freezing temperatures. Having a professional winterize your system also gives him or her a chance to inspect it for any problems or leaks.



SHOP LANDSCAPING OFFERS

Or visit [AngiesList.com/WinterOffers](https://www.AngiesList.com/WinterOffers)



TIP

Winter is a great time of year to consider having certain landscaping projects done, as many landscaping companies aren't as busy as they are in spring and summer.

pest control CHECKLIST

When you go outside during winter weather, you rarely see bugs or critters. That's because they've all sought shelter from the elements. Often, that shelter is inside your home. Take the following precautions to keep the pests outside your house:



- ☐ Clear debris from around the foundation to prevent an easy path inside for pests.
- ☐ Keep the garage and interior areas like cupboards and floors clean.
- ☐ Trim overhanging trees and bushes that lead to your roof or other potential entry points for wild animals and pests.
- ☐ Seal cracks and crevices in the foundation, siding, windows and doors. Even the smallest crack allows mice and other pests access to the home.
- ☐ Seal up pet food, lawn care products like fertilizer and grass seed and other tempting food sources for pests in a secure container with a lid.
- ☐ Keep firewood away from the home.
- ☐ Check exterior vents for openings and talk to an expert about adding mesh screens to keep critters out.
- ☐ Consider [hiring a pest control expert](#) to administer regular exterior treatments.

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