

HOW TO PROPERLY WINTERIZE YOUR HOME:

Jack cautions homeowners about the risks involved in using unqualified people to get their homes ready for winter.

“Traditionally, many homeowners like to winterize their homes themselves or hire a neighbor to do the work. That’s fine, as long as the work doesn’t require a license contractor and the person knows exactly what to do, but that’s not always the case, even with the best of intentions.”

“Last Fall, my friend’s elderly mother hired the guy who cuts her lawn to shut down her evaporative cooler. It was nice of him to do that, but he didn’t know that he was supposed to drain the water out of it. As a result, leaks developed in the water line and now she’s looking at an expensive repair of her plaster ceiling.”

Jack said scenarios like this one play out across the Country as some homeowners look for inexpensive ways to winterize their homes in anticipation of higher heating bills.

On top of getting a knowledgeable person to do the work, Jack gives six other general suggestions for homeowners getting ready for winter.

AC Shutdown: Typical forced-air units don’t require any maintenance to shut down for the winter. All of the maintenance lies in prepping the system for summer usage. If you have a swamp (or evaporative) cooler, you need to drain the water, disconnect the water supply and cover the unit.

Weather Stripping: Make sure the weather stripping around windows and doors isn’t worn down, check for cold air drafts coming in through the cracks.

Heating System: It is a must to change your furnace filter at least once a year, and there is no better time than right now before you are ready to use it. When you turn on your heater for the first time this season, there is usually a bad smell that comes from the vents. The cause is dust that has settled on the unit and has burned off when the unit heats up. If you haven’t cleaned the ducts in a long while, consider having them cleaned. This is a relatively quick and inexpensive process that will improve the efficiency of your HVAC unit and improve the air quality of your home. If you don’t have a programmable thermostat, try to get one. These devices keep you from heating the house when you are gone, when you are asleep. If programmed properly, these thermostats can save as much as \$40/month on your energy bills during the winter. **VERY IMPORTANT**, have a qualified and licensed heating contractor fully inspect your heating systems.

Jack continues, “Much of this can be done by the homeowner, but it’s never a bad idea to hire a trusted professional to do this and other seasonal maintenance for you, they know how to spot potential trouble areas that most people do not. That knowledge is especially important when it comes to units that use flammable materials such as natural gas.”

Have any questions for Jack Dever? Email him at jackdever@sbcglobal.net.