

## **Fall Home Maintenance Tips**

- Check all window and door locks for proper operation
- Check your home for water leaks
- Review your fire escape plan with your family
- Make sure there are working nightlights at the top and bottom of all stairs
- Have a heating professional check your heating system every year
- Protect your home from frozen pipes
- Replace your furnace filter
- Run all gas-powered lawn equipment until the fuel is gone
- Test your emergency generator
- Have a certified chimney sweep inspect and clean the flues and check your fireplace damper
- Remove bird nests from chimney flues and outdoor electrical fixtures
- Inspect and clean dust from the covers of your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Make sure the caulking around doors and windows is adequate to reduce heat/cooling loss
- Make sure that the caulking around your bathroom fixtures is adequate to prevent water from seeping into the sub-flooring

### **Check all window and door locks for proper operation.**

- Windows that can be opened by breaking the glass and unlocking them, are less effective deterrents to criminals. Check with the hardware store for window lock alternatives.
- All exterior doors should have deadbolt locks.

### **Check your home for water leaks.**

### **Make sure there are working nightlights at the top and bottom of all stairs.**

Other safety ideas for stairs:

- Tile and painted wood or concrete stairs can be slippery when wet or when a person's shoes are wet. Resurface the treads with slip-resistant strips near the stair nosing.
- All stairs of at least three risers should have a handrail.
- Do not store items on the stairs.

### **Have a heating professional check your heating system every year.**

Wood burning stove connector pipes and chimneys should be inspected by a certified chimney sweep at least annually.

### **Protect your home from frozen pipes.**

### **Replace your furnace filter.**

Furnace filters need to be replaced frequently to allow your heating and cooling systems to operate properly.

### **Run all gas-powered lawn equipment until the fuel tank is empty.**

By doing this, you are removing flammable liquid storage from your garage. At the same time, make sure you aren't storing dirty, oily rags in a pile. They can ignite spontaneously.

### **Have a certified chimney sweep inspect and clean the flues and check your fireplace damper.**

Soot and creosote, which build up inside the chimney, can ignite when a fire is lit in the fireplace.

### **Remove bird nests from chimney flues and outdoor electrical fixtures.**

Bird nests on top of light fixtures are a fire hazard. Bird nests in chimney flues can prevent a proper venting of combustion gases and can catch fire from sparks. You should exercise great caution when working on your roof or consider hiring a qualified professional to take care of any work that needs to be done.

### **Inspect and clean dust from the covers of your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.**

### **Make sure the caulking around doors and windows is adequate to reduce heat/cooling loss.**

Check glazing for loose or missing putty or glazing compound. This will also help reduce water damage to the windows and door frames.

### **Make sure that the caulking around your bathroom fixtures is adequate to prevent water from seeping into the sub-flooring.**

Check for cracked or missing caulk around the base of your toilet, bath tub, and bathroom cabinets. Properly sealing gaps between your bathroom fixtures and flooring material can prevent damage.