



# Is your home in brrr-illiant condition?



Winter can be a magical time. However, snow storms, freezing temperatures and long, dark nights can have a big impact on your home. Here's some steps you can take to help protect your home from winter weather.

## Outside

In your garden, driveway and around your home's exterior, there are a few things that can help prevent snow, ice and rain damage... but remember to get professional help for any hazardous jobs you shouldn't be doing yourself:



### Cut down overgrown branches

Dead branches and foliage from hedges can fall into and clog gutters. Snow can also build up on them, causing branches to snap, fall and damage anything below. Trim them back to help avoid this.

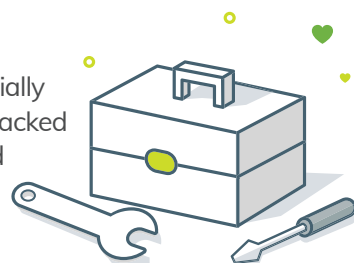
### Clear gutters and drains

Blockages in gutters and drains can lead to water backing up. It can start to run down the walls of your house and leak through the roof. If it freezes, the added weight can put a strain on plastic guttering and drainpipes, causing them to break. Clear them regularly during winter.



### Check and fix the roof

Make sure any aerials and satellites are secured, especially when strong winds are forecast. Assess and replace cracked or missing roof tiles. Again, water can leak through and freeze in cracks, possibly causing more damage.



# Inside

When you've ticked everything off the winter home maintenance checklist outside, there are a few key areas to focus on inside:



## Check the fireplace:

If you have a working fireplace, arrange an inspection to make sure it's not blocked and is fully functioning. Otherwise, this can cause draughts, while debris can create a fire hazard.

## Cut out draughts:

Check for any gaps around windows and doors that are causing draughts. Seal them up with weather-stripping or caulk. Consider double-glazing if it's not already in place, or replacing an old door with a new one.

## Insulate your walls and loft:

Around one third of all heat escapes through walls, so check if your home's walls are insulated. You'll need the help of a professional, but for loft insulation you can easily install this yourself.



## Top tip

During winter, the pipes in your home may be at risk of freezing and bursting. One of the most important home maintenance tips for winter is to protect against this – mainly through good home insulation, warm air circulation and maintaining a low heat setting.

## Energy saving cold weather tips

These energy-efficient cold weather tips can help you run a warm and comfortable winter home in a cost-effective way across three main areas.

### Heating

- Keep your heating on a constant low heat.
- Use a timer so the heating is only turned up when you're at home.
- When preparing for winter, turn the thermostat down by 1°C to save on heating bills.

### Lighting

- Switch to long-lasting, energy-efficient LEDs.
- Consider automatic lights or dimmer switches to adjust as natural light levels change.
- Simply turn off lights when not in use to use less energy.

### Appliances

- Check fridge and freezer settings, keeping them at really cold temperatures uses a lot of energy.
- Wash clothes at 30°C instead of 40°C.
- Fully turn off or unplug TVs, DVD players and computers when not in use.