

Renderings

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FALL 2015

Winterize Today for a **warm & cozy tomorrow**

The leaves are starting to fall off the trees, the birds are flying south and you can feel the temperature dropping. Like it or not, winter is on its way!

Now is the time to take steps to prepare yourself and your home for the cold, unforgiving season ahead. These simple steps will help ensure your home is comfortable, cozy and hazard-free this winter.

Seal the gaps

The average, mid-size U.S. home has an astonishing half-mile of gaps and cracks where cold outside air can enter the home and warm inside air can leak out. Air infiltration accounts for 38 percent of home energy loss.

Find the places where cold air sneaks into your home and you will drastically reduce your heating bills throughout winter. Feel along your windows and doors for any drafts. Seal larger cracks with caulk and cover your windows in plastic wrap for comprehensive protection. If you have a real chimney, don't forget to close the damper to prevent cold air from billowing down the chimney.

Inspect furnaces, filters and water heaters

If your furnace hasn't been checked for a while, have it inspected. Most likely, the filter will need to be replaced. Fall is also a good time to get duct work cleaned and to bleed the valves in your hot water heater.

Keep critters out

If you have had problems with mice in the past, now is the time to address where they may be entering the home.



Take steps now to prepare your home for the cold season ahead.

Examine the exterior and plug up even very tiny holes. It may be wise to install rodent-proof caps on the vents for the dryer and the oven, as this is one surprising way rodents may be entering the home.

Prepare your fireplace

Before you ignite that warm, crackling fireplace, make sure to put a screen at the top of your chimney to keep out rodents and birds. Hire a chimney sweep to remove soot buildup from last winter. Homeowners would also be wise to invest in a fire extinguisher and make sure everyone knows how to use it.

Protect pipes from freezing

A ruptured pipe can ruin your home and everything in it. Ruptured pipes occur during winter when the pipes freeze and the frozen water inside expands. You can protect against this by never letting your home's temperature fall below 65 degrees. Wrap pipes running along the exterior walls in heat tape, and be sure to check on your pipes on those bitterly cold nights.

Continued on next page



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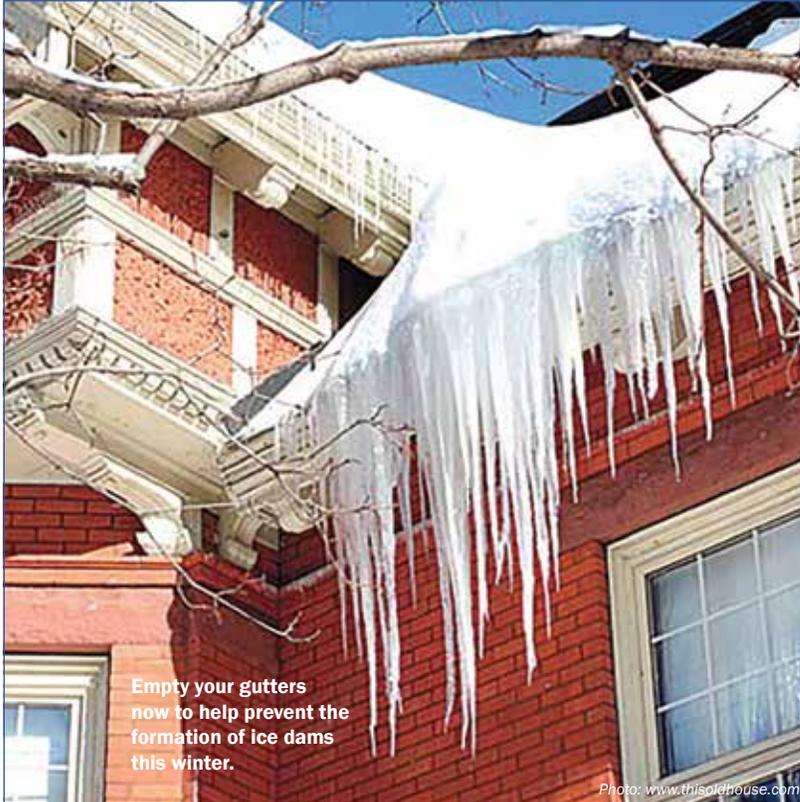


Winterize Today for a *warm & cozy tomorrow* Cont.

Empty the gutters to prevent ice dam formation

If left unchecked, falling leaves and other debris will clog your gutters and downspouts, which can cause ice dams in the winter. Start by trimming or removing trees and hedges near the gutters. If you lack the tools to complete this project, you can rent a brush cutter, tree trimmer or ladder to do the job. Once obstructions have been removed, clear the gutters to prevent a future home disaster.

The water that backs up behind an ice dam can leak into a home and cause damage to walls, ceilings, insulation and other areas. Now is the time to take action to prevent the formation of ice dams this winter. First, go into the attic and make sure the ceiling is air-tight so no warm, moist air can flow from the house into the attic space. Second, check your home to make sure you have adequate soffit and roof ventilation. After sealing air leakage paths between the home and attic space, consider increasing the ceiling/roof insulation.



With these tips in mind, all you need is a few days or a weekend to help ensure you have a warm, comfortable, energy-efficient and hazard-free environment for your family all winter long.

Change the rotation direction of your ceiling fan

Today's fans have a small switch that changes the rotation direction. During the winter months, turn your fan clockwise so that it sends the warmer air collected near the ceiling back down to your main living space. You'll have the benefit of circulated air that also keeps you and your family warm and comfy all winter long.

Schedule a home energy audit

Schedule a home energy audit through your utility company to identify areas of energy loss and projects that can help improve the overall energy efficiency of your home.

Source: NAHB, BPT

DIY Winter Maintenance Checklist

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- Clean out gutters and downspouts** to help prevent ice build-up in the winter; beware of overhead power lines and placement of extension ladders
- Change your furnace filter** for proper air flow
- Change the batteries in smoke detectors** (time it with Daylight Saving Time and change them twice a year)
- Install a carbon monoxide detector**
- Switch to a programmable thermostat** to save money and energy this winter

- Where is your fire extinguisher?** October is fire prevention month. Check with your neighborhood fire department for further details on fire and home safety issues
- Review your emergency escape plan** with your family in the event of a fire
- Pull forward your clothes dryer and check the duct/vent for lint;** clean out as necessary
- Shut off the exterior water;** drain garden hoses and winterize your sprinkler system by the end of October

- Check fireplace and chimney;** service or clean if needed
- Locate your home's water main** in case the plumbing freezes and water needs to be shut off
- Drain gas from the lawn mower** and store summer tools
- Consider sealing the driveways or wooden decks** in the fall rather than the spring to protect surfaces from frost
- Consider putting holiday lights up** before temperatures get cold

What is Universal Design?

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

What makes a home “universal”? It’s simple.

Everyone can use universal design! It doesn’t matter if you are young or old. You could be short or tall, healthy or ill. You might have a disability. Or you may be a prize-winning athlete. Because of universal design, people who are very different can all enjoy the same home. And that home will be there for all its inhabitants even when their needs change.

Here are some common universal design features that are also incorporated into aging-in-place remodels:

No-step entry. No one needs to use stairs to get into a universal home or into the home’s main rooms.

One-story living. Places to eat, use the bathroom and sleep are all located on one level, which is barrier-free.

Wide doorways. Doorways that are 32–36 inches wide let wheelchairs pass through. They also make it easy to move big things in and out of the house.

Wide hallways. Hallways should be 36–42 inches wide. That way, everyone and everything moves more easily from room to room.

Extra floor space. Everyone feel less cramped. And people in wheelchairs have more space to turn.

Some universal design features just make good sense. Once you bring them into your home, you’ll wonder how you ever lived without them:

Floors and bathtubs with non-slip surfaces help everyone stay on their feet. They’re not just for people who are frail. The same goes for handrails on steps and grab bars in bathrooms.

Thresholds that are flush with the floor make it easy for a wheelchair to get through a doorway. They also keep others from tripping.

Good lighting helps people with poor vision. And it helps everyone else see better, too.

Lever door handles and rocker light switches are great for people with poor hand strength. But others like them too. Try using these devices when your arms are full. You’ll never go back to knobs or standard switches!

Source: NAHB



In designing this bathroom addition, accessibility was key. A roll-in shower with two showerheads and a vanity that is open below provide ease of use for someone with limited mobility.



This family room addition can also be used as a bedroom, thanks to an adjoining bath, closet and laundry—all wheelchair-compatible.



An elevator in the home can be stylish as well as functional.



Aging-in-Place means...

The reassurance of being able to call a house a “home” for a lifetime

Aging-in-place is being able to remain in your home and community safely and as independently as possible, using products, services and conveniences to enable you to not have to move as your circumstances change throughout the maturing years of your life.

In order to stay in familiar surroundings as your requirements change, you may desire to modify your home to allow for better access to the features you need to use, ease of movement and to reduce accidents and falls throughout your home.

Pleckenpol Builders can assist you in remodeling your home to allow for accessibility and safety. Contact us for creative designs that fit your needs.

Remodeling

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Simple steps to prepare your home for the season ahead

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- **Universal Design**

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people

- Meet our new **Project Manager**

- **Planning, Design & Selections**

Careful planning and design are the keys to every successful project



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Remodeling Process | Planning, Design & Selections

Planning, Design & Selections

Careful planning and design are the keys to every successful project.

A great design addresses your needs for function and comfort, matches your lifestyle, considers future changes and fits within your budget. Your Project Manager's knowledge of building codes and standards will help determine the feasibility of the project.

Allowances and Selections Visit showrooms to see and touch products and to inquire as to the care and necessary maintenance. Also, check out our online Photo Gallery to gather ideas. Whether you are making product selections on your own or with the help of your Project Manager or an interior designer, it is important that all selections are made promptly, as delayed selections are likely to cause delays in scheduling.

For more step-by-step help navigating the remodeling process, visit our website at www.plekkenpol.com/Process.



Employee Spotlight:



Monte Mraz

Meet Monte Mraz, Project Manager

Monte Mraz has joined Plekkenpol Builders, Inc. as the newest member of our project management team.

Monte's position includes planning and design, estimating and sales of additions, kitchens, baths, whole house and all other types of residential remodeling and home maintenance. Monte has over 30 years of experience as a carpenter, remodeler, builder and developer in Minnesota. He is also a past president of the Builders Association of Minnesota and a Life Director at the National Association of Home Builders.

"The Plekkenpol team has developed a system and process that values the integrity of residential construction. To build and remodel homes for families is an honorable vocation and I am proud to work with a company that has a long history of customer care and construction integrity."

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The **Difference** is in the **Details**