

# Is your home winter ready?

Prevention is key when it comes to taking care of your home this winter



## Outside

You can take steps around your garden, driveway, and home exterior to prevent winter weather damage.

✓ **Trim back 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.

✓ **Clear gutters and drains regularly**

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.

✓ **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

After completing any outdoor tasks, focus on a few key indoor items.

✓ **Weatherproof against any draughts**

Check for any gaps around windows and doors that are letting in air and causing draughts. Seal them up with weather-stripping or caulk. Consider double-glazing if it's not already in place.

✓ **Insulate your walls and loft**

Cavity wall insulation can keep your home warmer and cheaper to heat in winter. Around one third of all heat escapes through walls, so check if your home's walls are insulated.

✓ **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.



## Reminder

Don't attempt anything that could cause injury; always seek professional help with tasks you don't feel fully confident or safe completing on your own.



### Frozen pipe prevention

During winter, the pipes in your home may be at risk of freezing and bursting and this can lead to damage and a cold house.

#### To prevent frozen pipes:

- **Insulate your loft:** Use good quality lagging, especially around your pipes and water tanks so they don't freeze.
- **Open the loft hatch occasionally:** This will allow warm air to circulate around pipes in the loft.

- **Fit new washers to dripping taps:** Stop the chance of water freezing and blocking the pipe.
- **Don't switch your heating off completely:** Maintain a low temperature and use frost protection thermostats on heaters where possible.

#### If a pipe has frozen, but not burst, avoid damage by:

- Removing carpet, furniture and electricals near the frozen pipe, to minimise damage if it bursts.

- Opening the tap nearest to the part of the pipe that's frozen. This allows water to flow easier once it has melted.
- Thawing the ice in the frozen pipe with a water bottle, hot cloth or hairdryer – it's important to keep this safely away from any water. Start at the end closest to the tap.