

# BLAKEFORD

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### **The Winter Home Prep Checklist**

More aging adults are opting to age in place, remaining in their own homes as they grow older. That means more seniors are handling their own home maintenance. For seniors who live in areas that experience all four seasons, preparing for the cold winter months by winterizing your home is a must.

Home winterization makes it easier to maintain comfortable temperatures inside your home and can cut down on your home heating costs, as well. This checklist outlines what seniors can do to prepare their homes for the cold winter months ahead.

#### **Prominently Display an Easy-to-Read Thermometer**

The CDC points out that as we [grow older](#), our ability to feel temperature changes diminishes. That means older adults may not realize the temperature inside the home has dropped or risen substantially. Displaying an easy-to-read thermometer in a prominent area will help you keep your home's temperature within the ideal range.

#### **Install Fresh Batteries in Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

If you have a fireplace or rely on kerosene or space heaters during the winter, make sure you have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in these areas. It's a good idea to test them monthly to ensure they're operating and replace the batteries at least twice each year. Leading into the winter months is a good time to install fresh batteries.

#### **Have Your Home Heating System Inspected and Cleaned**

Have a professional come in and [inspect](#) your home's heating system in the fall, ensuring that any fuel-burning equipment is adequately vented to the outdoors and that your heating equipment is in good

working order. Having your furnace or other home heating units cleaned, as well as your chimney, allows your system to operate at maximum efficiency, cutting down on your heating costs.

### **Take Care of Outdoor Furniture**

If you have [patio furniture](#) or other outdoor furnishings, the materials they're made of dictate how to properly care for them over the winter. For instance, furniture made of hard woods such as teak or cherry are safe to remain outdoors, while softer woods like pine and cedar should be covered or stored indoors. Heavyweight aluminum can stay put, but lightweight aluminum should be protected. Lightweight aluminum has hollow rails which, should water build up inside and freeze, can become cracked or damaged. Plastic and wicker furniture should also be stored indoors over the winter.

### **Clean Your Gutters**

Cleaning out your [gutters](#) may seem like it has nothing to do with winter, but this single task can spare your home from expensive damages during the harsh winter months. In the fall, leaves and other debris collect in gutters, which can block water from draining properly through your gutters and away from your home.

When your gutters are clogged, precipitation can build up on your roof, causing an ice dam, and in and around your home's foundation, causing cracks and reducing the integrity of foundation walls. If you think your gutters or roof need repairs, it's best to do them before the temperatures drop below freezing. You can find reliable contractors in your area by checking out those recommended by the Better Business Bureau. As this page for [Duval Roofing](#), a contractor in Massachusetts shows, BBB provides information about companies, customer reviews, and more.

### **Caulk Around Windows and Doors**

Tiny (and sometimes large) cracks that develop around windows and doors can lead to drafty conditions in the winter. What's more, these cracks allow energy to escape from your home, which ultimately increases your home heating costs. A bit of caulk to [fill any cracks](#) around doors and windows can keep your home cozier and your wallet fuller this winter.

### **Maintain Clear Paths and Walkways**

When snow falls, you'll want a clear path that can be shoveled and treated with salt to provide a safe path to and from your home. Inspect your [sidewalks and walkways](#) to look for cracks and fill them in. Unaddressed cracks will fill with water, which will expand as it freezes and create more damage to your sidewalks. Resurfacing worn concrete in the fall can save you thousands of dollars in replacing your walkways later.

### **Stock Up on Winter Basics**

Whether you'll be handling your own shoveling and sidewalk-treating this winter or you have a family member or friend who will take that task off your hands, you'll want to have a [few basic supplies](#) on hand. A snow shovel, rock salt or some type of de-icing compound, and waterproof floor mats are a few essential must-haves for coping with winter snow and ice.

For seniors opting to age in place, the winter season can be challenging. When the roads are treacherous and it's bitter cold outside, there's nothing better than enjoying the warmth of your

fireplace and the comfort of your bed knowing that you've adequately prepped your home for the winter.

**Marie Villeza** was inspired to start [ElderImpact.org](https://www.elderimpact.org) after watching her son and father bond over a smartphone game. Ever since, she's been working to bring the generations together so they can usher each other into the future, breaking down walls of fear and time. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, reading, and hiking.