

CANADIAN HOME WINTERIZATION CHECKLIST

Winterize the failure points, not the calendar

A practical condition-triggered checklist for Canadian homes. Start before the weather reaches the system that can fail: plumbing before freezing, heat before sustained demand, gutters after leaf drop, outage planning before storms, and winter checks after snow, ice and extreme cold.

How to use this: Add your own target date beside each item. Skip systems you do not have. Use the notes column for model numbers, contractor follow-up or local requirements. This is a planning checklist, not a code inspection, insurance promise or guarantee that a home is winter-safe.

1. BEFORE LOCAL FREEZING WEATHER

[]	Disconnect and drain garden hoses, splitters, timers and attachments from exterior faucets.	Before local overnight freezing	_____	
[]	Identify the actual winterization design for exterior faucets or seasonal water lines before operating unfamiliar shutoffs/drains.	Before local overnight freezing	_____	
[]	Winterize irrigation using the installed drain/blowout procedure and local or installer guidance.	Before freezing reaches seasonal components	_____	
[]	Inspect known cold-zone plumbing in crawlspaces, garages or other unheated areas for damaged/missing protection.	Before the first serious cold	_____	
[]	Walk the perimeter for low spots, erosion or surfaces sending water toward the foundation.	Fall while ground is visible/workable	_____	
[]	If your annual sump test is due, prove the pump moves water and inspect the exterior discharge for obstruction/freezing risk.	Before ground freeze / winter wet weather	_____	
[]	Private well: complete the six-month microbial water test if due.	Early fall is a useful sampling window	_____	

Professional boundary: Do not invent a valve sequence, irrigation compressor pressure, heat-trace installation or plumbing alteration. Use the actual equipment/manual and a qualified trade where the system is unclear.

2. BEFORE HEATING SEASON

[]	Run the heating system normally and confirm the thermostat call produces expected heat.	Before sustained heating demand	_____	
[]	Inspect the homeowner-accessible forced-air filter; clean/replace if loaded and follow the equipment schedule.	Before heating season; then by condition	_____	
[]	If due, arrange qualified heating-system service using the appliance/manufacture/local schedule.	Before heating season	_____	
[]	Test smoke alarms; continue monthly testing and check age/replacement instructions.	Before heating season + monthly	_____	
[]	If combustion equipment or attached garage applies, test CO alarms and check the model replacement/expiry instructions.	Before main combustion-heating season	_____	
[]	Wood stove/fireplace: arrange qualified annual inspection and keep chimney/flues on the required cleaning schedule.	Before the main burning season	_____	
[]	HRV/ERV: clean/service accessible filters and exterior hoods according to the unit manual.	Before closed-window heating season	_____	

3. AFTER THE MAIN LEAF DROP

[]	Clean eavestroughs and downspouts and confirm the discharge path is open.	After main leaf drop; before persistent snow/ice	_____	
[]	Confirm downspout water is directed toward good drainage and away from surrounding foundations.	Same fall drainage check	_____	
[]	Inspect the roof from a safe ground-level position for obvious damage.	Before snow hides the roof	_____	
[]	If the home has recurring ice dams, flag attic air-leak/insulation investigation rather than treating gutter cleaning as the cure.	Before heavy snow season	_____	

4. BEFORE WINTER STORMS

[]	Review the winter outage plan for heat, sump, well water, refrigeration, communications and household-specific needs.	Before local winter-storm season	_____	
[]	If you own backup power, complete the manufacturer-required readiness/maintenance check.	Before likely outages / after storage	_____	
[]	Confirm any fuel-burning generator can be operated outdoors at least 6 m (20 ft.) from homes/buildings and away from openings.	Before generator use	_____	
[]	Make sure a qualified electrician has handled any approved connection to household wiring.	Before an outage, not during one	_____	

5. DURING WINTER

[]	Inspect accessible combustion exhaust/intake openings during and after snowstorms; keep snow/ice from blocking them.	During/after snowstorms or drifting	_____	
[]	Heat pump: clear obstructing loose snow/excess ice around the outdoor unit without opening or striking equipment.	After snowfall / visible buildup	_____	
[]	Watch vulnerable plumbing during unusual cold; if it cannot be kept above freezing, follow current Canada.ca targeted freeze guidance.	Extreme-cold warning / unusual cold	_____	
[]	Watch room-side window condensation and recurring frost patterns; diagnose humidity/ventilation vs a local window problem.	When condensation appears	_____	
[]	After major thaw/rain-on-snow events, verify sump/drainage behaviour if your home depends on those systems.	After thaw / winter rain	_____	

6. BEFORE WINTER TRAVEL

[]	Read the issued home-insurance policy or ask the insurer/broker what winter absence conditions apply.	Before leaving the home unoccupied	_____	
[]	Make a property-specific heat, water, sump, leak-alert and outage plan; do not rely on one universal thermostat number.	Before leaving	_____	
[]	Confirm who can physically enter the home if heat, water, sump or power fails.	Before leaving	_____	
[]	Document any required inspection/check-in arrangement and emergency contacts.	Before leaving	_____	

Evidence notes

Current production guidance is grounded primarily in Canada.ca / Public Safety Canada winter-storm, extreme-cold and flood-maintenance pages; Health Canada fire, CO, moisture and private-well guidance; and Natural Resources Canada heating, heat-pump and attic/ice-dam guidance. Local examples are used only when labelled as local. Insurance Bureau of Canada guidance is context only; the issued policy controls.

NOTES / CONTRACTOR FOLLOW-UP

Full guide and personalized planner: readyhomecanada.com/winter/winterize-home-canada/