



## Autumn Greetings!

### The House Inspector Advantage

There are thousands of home inspectors – why should you choose us?

- ★ We teach you about your home, showing you how things work and explaining the issues we find.
- ★ Our team is experienced, having performed over 7000 inspections.
- ★ We provide you with an illustrated book that explains common defects and teaches you how things work.
- ★ Our computer-generated reports are prepared on-site.
- ★ Our inspectors are extensively trained.
- ★ Company owner Dave Westlund teaches at Inspection Training Associates (ITA), the oldest and largest inspector training school in the country.
- ★ We abide by the Code of Ethics of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI).
- ★ Our inspections are incredibly thorough, and place emphasis on investigating unusual situations, and accessing hard-to-reach places.
- ★ We're a family business and love this profession. We take pride in inspecting each home as if a member of our family were buying it.



## the House Inspector®

Get to know your home.

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Single family homes  
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Environmental services

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Over 7000 inspections completed.

A family business serving Chicagoland and beyond.

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## Autumn Home Maintenance Checklist





# autumn home maintenance checklist



## Gutters and Downspouts

Clean your gutters and downspouts. Clogged gutters cause major problems. Gutters overflow, causing moisture damage to walls and trim. Water drains near the foundation, leading to seepage and foundation problems. Clogged gutters can contribute to "ice-damming": Ice builds up on the edge of the roof, and sneaks under the shingles. When the ice melts, it causes moisture damage and roof leaks.

- Secure a bucket to your ladder to avoid making a mess on the ground.
- Use a hose to flush out any remaining dirt and small debris.
- Spray the hose down each downspout to test flow and remove blockages.
- Install extensions if downspouts do not discharge 6 feet away from the foundation.
- Don't use gutter screens! Leaves and debris collect on top of the screens, causing the overflow and moisture damage to shingles and walls that they are supposed to prevent. They also make cleaning the gutter extremely difficult because small debris can get through the screen and build up.

## Roof

Inspect your roof for loose, damaged, or missing shingles. Also, remove any debris, especially in valleys. Debris buildup rotting on the roof can cause damage and leaks.

- Know the age and condition of your roof, including number of layers. If you haven't recently hired a roofer to inspect the roof and perform typical maintenance, it's a good idea to do so.

## Foliage and Landscaping

Trim overgrown landscaping that touches or hangs over the house. Plants can trap moisture near the house, causing damage to walls. Trees that rub against the roof can damage shingles. Large branches can fall, causing major structural damage.

- Trimming bushes and shrubs can be a do-it-yourself job. For tree branches, hire a professional tree trimmer.
- If branches touch electric wires, contact a qualified tree trimmer immediately.

## Exterior Walls

Mice, rats, insects, and other critters would love to join your family for the holidays. Inspect exterior walls for openings, and hire a licensed contractor to properly seal them.

- Openings are often found near air conditioner coolant lines.
- Inspect and clean your dryer vent. Lint buildup can be costly (the dryer must work harder and longer) and dangerous (dryer lint is highly flammable). Be sure it has a damper (which prevents vermin from entering).

## Chimney

Hire a chimney sweep to clean and service all flues.

- Install rain caps where missing to prevent birds, small animals, or debris from entering and blocking the flue. Flue blockage can lead to carbon monoxide venting into the home – a serious safety hazard.

## Hose Faucets

Turn off supply valves to exterior faucets and drain. Remove hoses from hose bibs. Water in the hoses and pipes can freeze and expand, causing damage to pipes.

- Find the shut-off valve, usually in the basement or crawlspace, by tracing the piping from where it enters the house.

## Ejector and Sump Pumps

Test all sump and ejector pumps regularly. Install back up sump pumps for added protection.

- Test sump pumps by lifting the float or pouring water into the crock.
- Test ejector pumps (these pumps should be sealed) by running the fixtures that empty into them and listening for motor operation.
- We highly recommend installing a back-up sump pump.

## Heating

Hire a licensed HVAC contractor to perform annual service and maintenance to your furnace or boiler unit.

- Change furnace filters when dirty – this often means monthly. Dirty filters can cause unnecessary wear on the furnace and lead to higher fuel bills.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors on each level of the home, and in every bedroom. Buy dual carbon monoxide / combustible gas detectors for the furnace room.

## Air Conditioning

If you cover your exterior A/C unit during winter, use a cover designed specifically for your unit.

- Do not make your own A/C cover. Home-made covers can promote condensation and rust inside the unit. We recommend purchasing a cover made by the manufacturer.

## Weather-stripping

Check the condition of weatherstripping at all doors and install where missing.

- Old brass weatherstripping is less efficient than foam or rubber and often has sharp, dangerous edges. We recommend replacing it with foam or rubber.

## Crawlspace

Inspect crawlspace for moisture intrusion, moisture damage, and plumbing leaks.

- Seal crawlspace vents permanently. Vents allow cold air into the crawlspace in cool months. In warm months, humid air enters the crawlspace where it can condense and cause moisture damage and mold growth.