

Inspector's Notes

October 2018

Time for winter prep

With cool weather finally settling in to Alabama now is the time to get your home in shape for the coming winter months. People often take this time of year to perform annual home maintenance in preparation for the coming cold months.

If you're selling a home these items will help to make the home more presentable and more enticing to clients. Let's face it, if a buyer knows the home has been maintained they're more likely to be interested. Many of the items listed here can be found on any home inspection report. So, to keep them from showing up in a Summary Report, go ahead and address them now, while there's still time.

Safety First: Do a top-to-bottom review of the homes safety features. Replace batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Vacuum them with a soft brush attachment. Test out the detectors by pressing the test button to insure proper operation. If none are present then install smoke detectors on every floor and in each bedroom as a minimum.

The Roof: Take some time to look at the roof, from the ground with binoculars if necessary. Look for damaged, cracked, or curling shingles. Look at any exterior fixtures; satellite dish, antennae, etc. to make sure the mounts are properly secured.

The Gutters: Make sure they're secured to the house, don't have any dips which will hold water, and are free of debris. Clogged gutters will allow water to spill over and fall down around the foundation. This includes the downspouts.

The Outside: Check the siding around the house. Look for open areas, cracks, or holes where water can enter. Seal these areas to keep out water and pests looking for someplace warm. Check for caulk and sealant around all doors and windows.

Turn off the water: Turn off the outside faucets (hose bibs) and drain and store your hoses. Consider turning off the water to the hose bib from inside the house. This will help prevent the possibility of frozen pipes in colder weather.

Water heater: Drain the water heater to clear out any debris or sediment that may have settled to the bottom of the tank. This allows the water to heat more efficiently which will help to lower your heating bill.

Heating system: Check your home's heating vents. A vent that is free of obstructions like furniture, drapes, or carpeting is a well working vent. Dust the vents and change out all air filters making sure you check the filter at the furnace. Now is a good time to get your heater serviced and beat the fall rush.

Stop the drafts: Check the windows and doors for drafts. Look for any damaged or decayed insulation and make sure it has a proper fit. Check that vents are working properly and are closing when not in use. A good example is your dryer vent. Make sure it closes properly so you don't end up with cold air coming in through the laundry room.

Check the chimney: If you have a wood fireplace; make sure you clean out the ash and charred wood. Check the flue and if it looks like there might be a build up present then call a chimney sweep to clear it out. The last thing you need is a creosote fire. Check the damper to make sure it closes properly to keep out the cold. NOTE: if you have a gas fireplace then it should have a damper stop on it to keep the damper from closing (this is a Safety Concern). Since the damper will not fully close consider purchasing a solid fireplace screen or glass doors to place in front of the fireplace to keep out the draft when not in use.

Fill in the cracks: Now's the time to seal any cracks in your concrete or asphalt driveways, walkways, and patios. When water gets in the cracks in cold weather it freezes and expands which turns that small crack into something large you'll have to deal with later. Sealing the cracks now keeps out the water and lowers the future repair bills.

Addressing these items now will prevent headaches further down the road which will help when it comes time to sell the home.

*Take your inspection
to Higher Ground!!*

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**Higher Ground
Inspections**

Do you have a question you've encountered while out in the field? Has your client posed a question you're not familiar with. Is there something on which you'd like to hear more information? Let me know and I'll include it in my monthly newsletter.

If you have a question, you can count on it that others have the same question, so let me hear from you. Email your questions or inquiries to Higher Ground Inspections;

hginspectionsllc@gmail.com or

anthony@highergroundinspections.com.

Answers are always free. I look forward to hearing from you!