

THE WINTER HEATING CHECKLIST

A one-weekend plan to get your home, heating system, and gear ready for cold weather — safely, and without wasting money on heat that leaks out the windows. Print it, check it off, stay warm.

1 Furnace & heating system

- ☐ **Replace the furnace filter** — then every 1–3 months through winter.
- ☐ **Book an annual tune-up** before the first cold snap, when contractors are less busy.
- ☐ **Test the heat early:** run it for a full cycle and note any odd smells or noises.
- ☐ **Check the thermostat** — fresh batteries and a schedule set for winter.
- ☐ **Open and clear every vent;** don't block registers with furniture or rugs.
- ☐ **Keep 3 ft clear** around the furnace and water heater.
- ☐ **Heat pump?** Keep the outdoor unit clear of leaves and snow.

3 Seal drafts & cut your bill

- ☐ **Weatherstrip doors** and add door sweeps where you see daylight.
- ☐ **Caulk gaps** around window frames and trim.
- ☐ **Foam gaskets** behind outlets and switches on outside walls.
- ☐ **Insulate and seal the attic hatch.**
- ☐ **Set it to 68°F** while you're home and awake; lower it when asleep or away.
- ☐ **Ceiling fans** on low, running clockwise, to push warm air down.
- ☐ **Sun in, cold out:** open south-facing curtains by day, close them at night.

2 Safety first

- ☐ **Test smoke and CO alarms** and replace batteries.
- ☐ **A CO alarm on every level** and outside each sleeping area.
- ☐ **Space heaters:** plug directly into a wall outlet — never an extension cord or power strip.
- ☐ **Keep anything that can burn 3 ft** from space heaters.
- ☐ **Turn space heaters off** when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- ☐ **Never heat your home** with an oven, grill, or camp stove.
- ☐ **Fire extinguisher** charged and easy to reach.

4 Pipes & outside

- ☐ **Disconnect garden hoses** and shut off outdoor faucets.
- ☐ **Insulate exposed pipes** in crawl spaces, garages, and exterior walls.
- ☐ **Find your main water shutoff** before you need it.
- ☐ **Clean the gutters** to help prevent ice dams.
- ☐ **Chimney inspection** if you'll use a fireplace or wood stove.

Quick win: the U.S. Department of Energy estimates you can save up to 10% a year on heating by turning the thermostat back 7–10°F for 8 hours a day — while you sleep or are at work. A programmable or smart thermostat does it automatically.

5 Power-outage kit

- ☐ **Flashlights** and spare batteries (skip candles).
- ☐ **Phone power banks**, fully charged.
- ☐ **Blankets and warm layers** for every person.
- ☐ **Water and easy food** for at least 3 days.
- ☐ **Generator?** Only outdoors, at least 20 ft from windows and doors — never in a garage.
- ☐ **Battery-backup CO alarm** in case the power is out.

7 Heated gear

- ☐ **Fully charge every battery** — socks, gloves, vests, insoles.
- ☐ **Inspect cables and connectors** for fraying; replace damaged gear.
- ☐ **Test each heat setting** before your first cold outing.
- ☐ **Pack a spare battery** or power bank for long days.
- ☐ **Wool or synthetic socks** — cotton holds sweat and makes feet colder.

6 Garage, car & workshop

- ☐ **Car emergency kit:** blanket, scraper, jumper cables, flashlight, snacks.
- ☐ **Check battery and tires** before the first freeze.
- ☐ **Seal the garage door** bottom with new weatherstripping.
- ☐ **Propane heater?** Indoor-rated only, with ventilation and a CO alarm.
- ☐ **Store fuel and solvents** away from any heater.

8 Know when to call a pro

- ☐ **Yellow or flickering burner flame** on a gas furnace.
- ☐ **CO alarm sounds** — get everyone outside first, then call 911 or your gas company.
- ☐ **Short cycling** — the furnace turns on and off every few minutes.
- ☐ **Rooms that never warm up**, or bills jumping year over year.
- ☐ **System over 15 years old** — get a replacement estimate before it fails in January.

Not sure how much heater a room needs?

Our free BTU calculator sizes any room in seconds.

onlyheaters.com/btu-calculator

Time for a tune-up or a new system?

Request a free, no-obligation quote from a local HVAC contractor.

onlyheaters.com/hvac-referrals

My winter maintenance log

TASK	DATE DONE	NEXT DUE	NOTES
Furnace filter changed			
Furnace filter changed			
Furnace filter changed			
Heating tune-up			
Smoke & CO alarms tested			
Chimney / vent inspected			

Notes
