

Winterizing Your Minnesota Home: Tips from a Builder's Perspective



As builders, we've seen how Minnesota winters can test even the sturdiest homes. Beyond energy efficiency and structural integrity, winter also affects interior features like hardwood floors. Proper preparation will protect your investment and keep your home warm, safe, and beautiful all season long.

1. Maintain the Envelope of Your Home...

The "envelope" of your home—its walls, roof, windows, and doors—is your first defense against the cold.

- **Energy Audit:** Have a professional energy audit done on your home. Thermal imaging and professional observation can help pinpoint energy loss and water infiltration and help you identify areas that most need improvement.
- **Windows and Doors:** Inspect for drafts and seal gaps with weatherstripping or caulk. Consider upgrading to energy-

efficient windows for added protection.

- **Siding and Trim:** Repair cracks to prevent cold air and moisture infiltration.
- **Attic insulation and ventilation:** Assuring proper insulation and ventilation can prevent ice dams and save on energy usage.
- **Inspect and Maintain Your Roof:** Look for loose or damaged shingles and repair them before snow arrives.
- **Prevent Ice Dams:** Ice dams are a common winter issue that can lead to significant damage. Make sure your attic is properly insulated and ventilated to prevent uneven snowmelt. Clean gutters and downspouts to allow proper drainage.

2. Protect Your Hardwood Floors...Winter conditions like fluctuating humidity and tracked-in snow can wreak havoc on hardwood floors.

- **Humidity Control:** Dry winter air causes wood to shrink, leading to gaps between planks. Invest in a whole-home humidifier or use portable units to maintain indoor humidity levels between 35-55%.
- **Prevent Water Damage:** Snow, ice, and salt tracked in on shoes can cause staining and warping. Use entryway rugs and waterproof mats to protect your floors.
- **Regular Maintenance:** Sweep and mop regularly with a damp (not wet) mop to remove abrasive debris and maintain your floor's finish.

3. Protect Plumbing...Frozen pipes are a costly and stressful problem.

- Insulate pipes in unheated areas, like basements and exterior walls.
- Keep your thermostat consistent, even when you're not home.

4. Boost Energy Efficiency

- Install a programmable thermostat to save on heating costs.
- Replace old inefficient appliances, furnace, and water heater.
- Consider storm doors or windows for added insulation.

5. Prioritize Safety

- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Winter heating methods can increase CO risks.
- Have your heating system inspected to ensure safe and efficient operation.

At Boyer Building, we know how to design and maintain homes that can stand up to Minnesota winters. From protecting your hardwood floors to ensuring structural durability, preparing now will save you time, money, and stress later. If you've identified improvements that need to be made to your home, contact Boyer Building for professional guidance and services tailored to your home!