Fall Home Maintenance Checklist

A practical Iowa-focused checklist to help homeowners prepare for colder weather.

Dallas Wood - REALTOR®
641-740-7544
dallas@dallaswoodrealty.com

Use this checklist in early-to-mid fall so you're ahead of Iowa's freeze-thaw cycle, first hard freeze, and winter weather surprises.

1) ROOF, GUTTERS & DRAINAGE

- ☐ Clean gutters and downspouts thoroughly after leaves begin to fall.
- ☐ Make sure downspouts carry water 4-6 feet away from the foundation.
- ☐ Look for loose shingles, cracked flashing, or exposed nail heads.
- ☐ Check for drips or staining in the attic after heavy rain.
- ☐ Clear leaves from window wells, low spots, and driveway drains.

2) WINDOWS, DOORS & EXTERIOR

- ☐ Replace worn weatherstripping and door sweeps before cold air moves in.
- ☐ Caulk exterior gaps around windows, trim, siding joints, and utility penetrations.
- ☐ Inspect handrails, porch steps, and exterior lighting before slippery weather.
- ☐ Touch up peeling paint or bare wood to help prevent moisture damage.
- ☐ Store or secure patio furniture, cushions, and lightweight decor.

3) HVAC, FIREPLACE & SAFETY

- ☐ Replace the furnace filter and schedule a tune-up if needed.
- ☐ Test the thermostat before the first real cold snap.
- ☐ Vacuum heat registers and make sure furniture isn't blocking returns.
- ☐ Test smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors; replace batteries as needed.
- ☐ Have a wood-burning or gas fireplace inspected if you use it.

4) PLUMBING & FREEZE PREP

- ☐ Disconnect hoses, drain them, and shut off exterior hose bibs if possible.
- ☐ Winterize irrigation or sprinkler systems before a hard freeze.
- ☐ Insulate exposed pipes in garages, unfinished basements, or crawl spaces.
- ☐ Test your sump pump and confirm the discharge line drains properly.
- ☐ Know where your main water shutoff is located in an emergency.

5) YARD, TREES & WINTER READINESS

- ☐ Rake or mulch leaves so wet mats don't smother grass or clog drains.
- ☐ Trim dead or overhanging branches that could break under snow or ice.
- ☐ Fertilize and winterize the lawn if that fits your fall routine.
- ☐ Service the snowblower, stock ice melt, and locate shovels now.
- ☐ Check driveway and walkway cracks while weather is still mild.

6) INSIDE THE HOME

- ☐ Reverse ceiling fans to clockwise on low to help circulate warm air.
- ☐ Check attic insulation, attic access seals, and visible air leaks.
- ☐ Clean the dryer vent, vacuum refrigerator coils, and replace humidifier pads if needed.
- ☐ Review your emergency kit: flashlights, batteries, bottled water, and blankets.
- ☐ If you plan to sell in the next 6-9 months, start a short repair list now.

Selling next spring? Fall is a smart time to get ahead.
Taking care of maintenance now can help your home show better later. If you'd like a pre-listing walk-through or want to talk about timing, updates, and value, I'd be glad to help.