



Fall Furnace Checklist

Print this. Work through it across three weekends before the first cold snap.

Stop and leave the house first if any of these apply

You smell a sulphur or rotten egg odour. A carbon monoxide alarm is sounding. You see smoke or smell burning. Call your gas utility's emergency line or emergency services from outside.

Early September: the walk-around

- ☐ **Look for rust streaks or staining**
On the furnace cabinet, the venting, and the base.
- ☐ **Check for water anywhere near the unit**
Damp concrete counts.
- ☐ **Clear stored items away from the furnace**
Furnace rooms turn into storage. Give it room to breathe.
- ☐ **Walk outside and find the vent pipes**
Usually two white plastic pipes, low on an exterior wall.
- ☐ **Clear webs, leaves and nests from the vent openings**
Keep a clear space around them, and remember where they are for snow season.

Mid September: airflow

- ☐ **Change the furnace filter**
Note the size on the old frame. The arrow points toward the furnace.
- ☐ **Open every floor register**
Including rooms nobody uses.
- ☐ **Clear furniture away from cold air returns**
A couch pushed against a return is the most common airflow problem we see.

Late September: the test run

- ☐ **Set the thermostat to heat, above room temperature**
Pick a cool evening.

☐ **Stand near the furnace and listen for twenty minutes**

A burning-dust smell for the first ten to fifteen minutes is normal and fades.

☐ **Note anything that sounds wrong**

Banging on ignition, metallic scraping, a squeal, or repeated starting and stopping.

☐ **Feel the airflow in the room farthest from the furnace**

Noticeably weak there is worth mentioning at your next service visit.

Before the first cold snap

☐ **Test every carbon monoxide alarm**

Press the test button. Check the manufacture date on the back, since sensors expire.

☐ **Change the thermostat batteries**

Do it now, not during the first cold week.

☐ **Set or review the thermostat schedule**

☐ **Service the humidifier if you have one**

Water panel and bypass damper. The damper is the part people forget.

Leave to a licensed technician: anything behind the burner access panel, heat exchanger inspection, blower wheel removal, any gas line work, and combustion and draft testing. Book that separately from this checklist. They are not substitutes for each other.

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This guide covers homeowner-level checks only. Work on gas-fired appliances in Ontario is restricted to licensed technicians. If you smell gas or a carbon monoxide alarm sounds, leave the building first and call from outside. Conditions vary by home and equipment, so treat this as general guidance and confirm anything specific with a licensed technician.