Winterize Your Home Heating: A Three-Weekend Guide

A simple timeline for getting an Ottawa home's heating system ready for winter

Six Weeks Out

1. **Run a full heat cycle**

   Turn the thermostat to heat and let the system run through a complete cycle, listening for anything unusual once the first-run dust smell clears.

2. **Check the thermostat**

   Confirm the mode is set to heat and the fan is set to auto, and replace batteries if the display looks dim or unresponsive.

3. **Book a seasonal visit**

   Scheduling a check while appointment slots are open is easier than booking one once the whole city needs heat the same week.

Two Weeks Out

1. **Look at the ductwork**

   If it has been a while since the ducts were inspected, restricted airflow can make a heating system work harder than it needs to.

2. **Check the humidifier**

   A whole-home humidifier that sat idle over summer often needs a fresh pad or filter before its first real week of use.

3. **Plan for backup heat**

   Decide ahead of time what the household will do if the system needs a repair during a cold stretch, before that plan is needed.

What to Ask a Technician

1. **What is the system's condition**

   Ask for a plain-language summary of what they found, not just a pass or fail.

2. **What would the next repair likely involve**

   A technician who has seen the system before can usually describe what to expect next.

3. **What should trigger an immediate call**

   Ask them to describe the specific sounds, smells or symptoms that mean stop and call rather than wait.

This guide is general seasonal information for Ottawa homeowners and is not a substitute for a professional inspection of your specific heating system.

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