



Home Winterization Tips

Homeowners should always think ahead about making seasonal updates to their homes, particularly winterization. Not only do these types of home improvements enhance living environments in colder months and possibly lower energy costs, but most can provide an above average return on investment in resale value. Homeowners should contact an appraiser on the front end of their winterization projects, as they can make recommendations about which updates will potentially provide the most impact on resale value, as well as what is the norm for the local area.

What main updates should homeowners focus on for the winter?

According to Remodeling magazine's 2019 [Cost vs. Value Report](#), home improvement projects with the highest expected return on investment are [garage door replacement](#), [manufactured stone veneer](#), [minor kitchen remodel](#) and [entry door replacement \(steel\)](#).

Other winterization renovations that homeowners might consider are protection for [landscaping](#), [decks](#), [pools](#) and [roofs](#), which can potentially add to property values.

What updates can homeowners make now to see an immediate saving in their energy bills?

According to the [Energy Saver Guide](#), produced by U.S. Department of Energy, weatherizing a home can save money and energy. For example, by sealing uncontrolled air leaks consumers can save 10%-20% on heating and cooling bills which comprise approximately 35%-40% of a property's annual energy use. The Energy Saver Guide also says homeowners should:

- Insulate air ducts that are in unconditioned spaces. If the ducts are poorly sized, poorly sealed or poorly insulated, they are likely contributing to higher energy bills.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed. Make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.
- Follow manufacturer recommendations. If the hot water tank is warm to the touch, consider insulating it to save 7%-16% annually in water heating costs.
- Install heat traps on the hot and cold pipes at the water heater to prevent heat loss. Most new water heaters have built-in heat traps.
- Determine their eligibility for [weatherization and home energy assistance](#).

Where can homeowners find more information about winterization and other home improvements?

For additional information on home improvements that can be made throughout the year, see the Appraisal Institute's [Home Improvement Tips fact sheet](#). In addition, the [Cost vs. Value Report](#), published by Remodeling magazine gives a general dollar estimate and the percentage of return a homeowner can expect to receive from an improvement project in a resale situation.

How can a homeowner locate a professional appraiser in their area?

Finding a professional appraiser is just a few clicks away. Simply go to www.appraisalinstitute.org/findappraiser, where consumers can search for appraisers in their area.