

## ***WINTER PREP TALK: Top tips to protect your property this winter***

by Adam Smith



**With winter here and temperatures dropping, it's the perfect time to undertake maintenance on your home or rental property for the weather ahead.**

A few simple checks and changes can help you save time, money and avoid future stress by being prepared. It will also help keep you warm, dry and happy.

### **1. Clear your roof and gutters**

Gutters have a pretty clear purpose – they're there to drain rain. But piled with leaves and debris, the rain has to go elsewhere and flows over the top of guttering, or carries the debris with it and clogs downpipes. If left unattended, this can cause penetrating damp, rotting fascias, corrosion and broken drains.

Instead of making a mad dash to clear a blockage in the middle of a downpour, get on the roof while it's safe and dry, and clear out all your guttering, downpipes and drains.

As a final step to stop mould and lichen from growing, you can mix one part bleach to four parts water and wash gutters out. If you collect rainwater from the roof for domestic use, then remember to disconnect the drainpipe before cleaning it. Rinse the entire system thoroughly with clean water before reattaching the downpipe. Also, take care when using water blasters or hoses as the high pressure can result in water penetrating your house.

### **2. Trim those branches**

As well as filling your gutters with leaves, overhanging branches can do even more harm to your roof. During high winds they can scratch, gouge and even puncture roofing materials. Tree branches can break and cause damage to your roof or power lines too, so take a careful look around your property and see where hazardous branches or even dangerous trees may be.

When pruning branches, remember to stay safe and keep clear of any power lines. Depending on the scale of the tree, you may need to enlist professional help.

### **3. Watch your windows**

Whether you've got aluminium or wooden joinery, windows are an obvious place for moisture to creep in over winter.

Keep a close eye on window seals, and water and wind coming in through joinery, and address any problems quick-smart. A great tip is to run a strip of self-adhesive foam (cheap and available from hardware stores) around draughty windows – this instantly stops cold air from entering the home.

Simple measures like this can save you a lot of money in the long run in costly maintenance, and in power too. [Take a look at these smart joinery maintenance tips from Consumer NZ.](#)

### **4. Maintain your home heating**

If you own a heat pump or a wood burner, you will now have it in use. To ensure they are working efficiently and safely, call the experts to service them.

- Wood burner - Under your House Insurance policy there is likely to be a requirement for your fire to be checked and cleaned annually. Even if not, it is still a recommended seasonal check to have your chimney swept and the flue and vents inspected.
- Heat pump - Annual maintenance checks on your heat pump are important. Have your dirty air filters and vents cleaned in both your indoor and outdoor units to ensure your heat pump is working efficiently.

[Here are some extra tips on heating your home as efficiently as possible this winter.](#)

Hopefully staying on top of maintenance will steer you clear of expensive problems over time. Wishing you a warm and safe winter from the team at [Iron Bridge Property Management](#) and [Iron Bridge Real Estate](#).