

# FALL & WINTER CHECKLIST

As fall and winter make an appearance, Maglio Electric urges you to prepare your home and property for cooler temperatures, volatile weather patterns, and seasonal changes. Prioritize these chores before the thermometer dips, and your home will stay home safe, energy efficient, and cozy for the months to come.

## Outdoor Inspection

### Clean the gutters.

- ▶ Twigs, leaves, shingle grains, and other debris tend to collect over the course of the summer, weighing down gutters and blocking water flow. Safely ascend your ladder when someone else is home, and remove debris buildup with a trowel or small shovel. (When you have to reach more than an arm's length away, it's time to move the ladder!)
- ▶ When debris removal is complete, use your hose to spray the gutters and wash out leftover dirt. This is also a good time to touch up gutter paint to improve the curb appeal of your home. If your home has an exceptionally high roof, or you are not comfortable with heights, hire a licensed and insured contractor to clean your gutter system.

### Drain outdoor faucets and winterize your sprinkler system.

- ▶ Before the first freeze, it's important to take care of exterior water sources. A sudden frost can cause leaks and system damage that you'll be paying for long after winter's end. Shut off your home's main water supply and open exterior water valves. Allow water to drain out of the main water line, and turn the valves off when this is complete. You may also wish to wrap the valves in towels to further protect them from the cold.
- ▶ If you have a sprinkler system, it's best to schedule a sprinkler blowout to ensure that pipes won't freeze and burst. Unless you have experience with this winterization process, hire a landscaping company to complete the task. Sprinkler blowout requires an air compressor, and can be dangerous for do-it-yourself homeowners.

### Hire a chimney cleaner.

- ▶ Before the company arrives, remove charred wood and ash remnants from your fireplace. Your chimney cleaner will take care of the rest: cleaning out ash and soot and removing creosote chemical deposits that can cause chimney fires. With over 25,000 of these fires each year, it's critical to have your chimney cleaned and inspected every year.
- ▶ Your chimney sweep can also inspect the functionality of your fireplace damper so you don't have to tolerate chilly drafts during the winter.

## Indoor Inspection

### Maintain your heating and cooling system.

- ▶ Heating and cooling maintenance should not be considered optional. Research shows that well-maintained systems last years longer than neglected equipment. Your qualified HVAC contractor will clean

and lube components, change your filter, ensure temperature stability, and advise you of necessary maintenance before costly repairs arise.

- ▶ Remove window air conditioning units when the weather cools down, and clean and store them properly for next year. This is a good time to clean your windows, too!

### **Drain the water heater.**

- ▶ Over time, minerals and debris can build up in your water tank. To improve water heater efficiency and prevent sediment buildup, flush your water heater every one to three years—depending upon equipment age and usage frequency.

### **Test electrical outlets & GFCI outlets.**

- ▶ Use a “tester” from the local hardware store, or just plug in a lamp or radio. If an outlet isn’t working, it may be a loose wire, or a sign of a bigger problem.
- ▶ Plug in a tester or lamp, and press the “Test” button. The lamp should turn off. If the GFCI is working properly, the lamp should turn on again when you press the “Reset” button. If GFCI’s or other outlets do not appear to be working properly—or if cords feel hot to the touch when you plug or unplug them, call an electrical contractor immediately.

### **Test carbon monoxide and smoke alarms.**

- ▶ Seasonal checks of your carbon monoxide and smoke alarms are a good idea. Alarms should sound when you press the “Test” button, and should be replaced every five to 10 years, depending upon manufacturer recommendations.

### **Inspect for drafts.**

- ▶ Loose baseboards and outlets or faulty window/door seals lead to chilly drafts and costly utility bills. Use a smoke pen or a damp hand to detect leaks. Seal leaks with weather stripping or caulking.

### **Prepare your generator for storms.**

- ▶ Get ready for power outages by inspecting your generator for corrosion, changing the oil, inspect/change the air filter, and filling the gas tank. An electrical professional can provide a more thorough generator evaluation to ensure that you’re prepared for storm season. Regular maintenance ensures safe and reliable generator performance.

At Maglio Electric, it is our goal to educate home and business owners while protecting families from preventable risks. Our experienced team of technicians and licensed electricians can assist you with seasonal electrical maintenance, and we have the know-how to address any electrical project in your home. For questions about proper maintenance of your electrical system, or to request a visit from our team, call 908.735-6218 or 908.735.2126 today. We’re happy to help!