

FALL | Knoxville, Farragut & Lenoir City | About 25 active minutes

This week: get ready for the first freeze.

Do this before the first freeze. If freezing weather is forecast, do it today. Work on a dry, mild day. You will need gloves, a cloth, a place to drain hoses and dry storage.

☐ Unhook every hose

Turn off the faucet. Remove the hose, splitter, timer and nozzle so water can drain. Work on a mild, dry day. If a connection is stuck, stop and get help.

☐ Drain, coil and store hoses

Lay the hose on a slope or lift it from one end to drain it completely. Coil loosely. Drain the nozzle and accessories, then store everything in a dry, protected place.

☐ Prepare each outdoor faucet

Conventional: close the dedicated indoor shutoff gently; open the outdoor faucet and drain as your setup's instructions direct. Follow the manual for any drain cap and winter valve position. Frost-free: remove all attachments, close normally and let it self-drain. Unsure: leave the hose disconnected and have a licensed plumber identify and prepare the setup.

Safety: Do not force a valve or guess at an unfamiliar shutoff.

Woodford: frost-free faucets | Red Cross: freeze prevention

☐ Walk around the house once more

Check each faucet again after drainage stops. Look for a cracked body, continuing drips or dampness inside near the pipe. Note anything that needs repair. A cover can supplement the correct winterization, but cannot replace it.

Safety: Call a licensed plumber for continuing leaks, damage or a suspected frozen pipe.

☐ Optional: Add a fitted insulated faucet cover

Allow about 5 additional minutes

After preparing the faucet for its type, fit a compatible insulated cover snugly against the wall. Follow cover instructions; extra insulation is not a substitute for drainage.

Safety: A cover adds insulation. It does not replace correct shutoff and drainage or guarantee protection during prolonged freezing weather.

Home Depot: faucet cover | Lowe's: faucet cover

KNOW WHEN TO CALL A PRO

Call a licensed plumber for a stuck shutoff, continuing leak, damaged faucet or suspected frozen pipe. Never use a torch or open flame. If a pipe bursts, shut off water if safe and call a plumber. Stay away from water near electrical equipment.

Watch or read: [This Old House: How to Prevent Frozen Pipes](#) | [Companion guide](#) | [NWS local forecast](#)

Independent resources. Equipment instructions take priority. Guidance checked October 23, 2026. Estimates exclude repairs, machine cycles and professional service.

RECURRING CARE | Additional to the main task

Other maintenance this week

Up to 83 active minutes if every item applies. Spread these across the week. Skip equipment you do not have and monthly checks you have already completed. Model instructions determine appliance cleaning intervals.

INSIDE

☐ **Look for leaks and dampness**

Look under sinks and at ceilings. Aim for 30-50% humidity, below 60%. Address leaks promptly; dry wet materials within 24-48 hours.

☐ **Read fridge and freezer thermometers**

Read actual thermometers: refrigerator 40°F or below; freezer 0°F or below. Investigate unsafe readings promptly.

☐ **Check the dishwasher filter**

Only clean a serviceable filter when due per the manual. Switch off first, watch for sharp debris, rinse gently and refit securely. Do not force it.

☐ **Run the washer's cleaning routine**

Run the approved cleaning cycle; clean the dispenser, gasket and serviceable filters as directed. Never mix products or open an unfamiliar pump trap.

☐ **Check exposed-pipe insulation**

Inspect safely accessible pipes in unheated spaces. Repair small gaps with suitable material. Avoid combustion vents; follow heat-cable instructions.

MONTHLY SAFETY

☐ **Test smoke alarms**

Use every test button per the manual. Check manufacture dates and replace failed or expired units. Qualified electricians handle hardwired work.

☐ **Test carbon monoxide alarms**

Test per the manual and check its end-of-life date. If a CO alarm sounds, get outside to fresh air and call 911.

☐ **Inspect the HVAC filter**

Turn the system off for access. Inspect condition, size and airflow direction; clean or replace with a compatible filter as instructed.

☐ **Inspect the fire extinguisher**

Check access, pin, body and gauge if fitted. Follow label service dates. Never discharge to test; service or replace damaged or undercharged units.

OUTSIDE

☐ **Empty small containers holding water**

Empty and scrub, cover or turn over small water-holding containers weekly while mosquitoes are active. Avoid unsafe water and electrical hazards.

Guides: [EPA moisture](#) | [FDA food safety](#) | [USFA alarms](#) | [ENERGY STAR filters](#) | [CDC mosquitoes](#)

OPTIONAL | Use what fits your home

Housekeeping & other reminders

Cleaning: about 2 hr 55 min active time across the week (143 min routine + 30 min detail). Machine cycles add time. Follow care labels, ventilate and never mix cleaners.

REGULAR CLEANING ROUTINE

- ☐ **Wipe down the kitchen:** Counters, cooled stovetop, sink and appliance fronts.
- ☐ **Vacuum and mop floors:** Include stairs. Use the method approved for your flooring.
- ☐ **Dust and refresh upholstery:** Top to bottom. Vacuum cushions and fluff pillows.
- ☐ **Clean bathrooms and reachable glass:** Toilets, sinks, tub or shower, mirrors and glass.
- ☐ **Review food storage and empty bins:** Check leftovers. Wipe sticky trash and recycling bins.
- ☐ **Wash bedding, towels and bathmats:** Replace sheets and pillowcases. Follow care labels.

THIS WEEK'S DETAIL | ABOUT 30 MIN

- ☐ **Dust reachable fan blades**
Switch off first. Use a dry cloth or pillowcase on compatible blades. Use a stable step stool; hire help for height. Do not wet motors or bend blades.
- ☐ **Clean window treatments, trim and sills**
Vacuum compatible treatments; dust reachable trim and sills. Follow care labels. Secure cords and hire help for high or heavy treatments.

HOUSEHOLD AND VEHICLE | ADDITIONAL TIME

- ☐ **Book irrigation winterization**
Book professional irrigation winterization before a freeze. No DIY blowout. Allow 15 min.
- ☐ **Do a quick household paperwork review**
Sort reading, review transactions, inboxes and due bills privately; avoid duplicate payments. About 23 min.
- ☐ **Check refrigerator odor absorbers**
If used, check odor absorbers against product directions. About 2 min.
- ☐ **Review engine and cabin filter service**
Review engine/cabin filter dates, mileage and manual; replace only when due. About 10 min.
- ☐ **Check tires, including the spare if fitted**
Check cold pressure against the vehicle placard, not the sidewall maximum. Inspect tread, damage and spare if fitted. About 10 min.
- ☐ **Review the vehicle's cold-weather kit**
Review lights and winter supplies; secure the kit and follow product storage limits. About 15 min.

Between reminders: clean lint screens each load. Check after storms; act promptly on failed alarms, leaks and hazards. NHTSA: [NHTSA tire safety](#) | [Winter preparation](#).