

Austin Home Maintenance Checklist by Season

Your year-round guide to keeping an Austin home in shape

Fall

When the clocks fall back, test the alarms, change the filter, and service the heater before the first cold front.

- ☐ Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- ☐ Replace a chirping 10-year sealed alarm, or any smoke alarm older than 10 years. Other alarms get a new battery.
- ☐ Smoke alarms go in each bedroom, outside sleeping areas, and on every level
- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarms go on each level and outside sleeping areas
- ☐ Replace the HVAC filter
- ☐ Schedule heater service before the first cold front
- ☐ Clear gutters and downspouts

Filter: every 60 to 90 days (Austin Energy, citing the EPA), sooner in heavy use. ENERGY STAR says monthly. Renters, ask the property manager.

Winter

Find the shutoff, cover the hose bibs, and drain the irrigation before a freeze.

- ☐ Find the house shutoff before you need it
- ☐ Remove hoses, cover the hose bibs, and drain the irrigation
- ☐ Insulate pipes in attics and garages, and follow the water heater instructions
- ☐ In a short freeze, drip faucets and open sink cabinets on exterior walls
- ☐ If you are away, shut the water off and keep the heat at 65 or higher
- ☐ If a pipe freezes, shut the water off. Thaw from the faucet toward the wall. No open flame.
- ☐ Prune oaks only on a cold midwinter day, and paint every cut the same day

For a freeze longer than two days, follow the updates Austin Water posts at the time.

Spring

Service the air conditioner and the condensate drain before the first long run of heat.

- ☐ Service the air conditioner and confirm the condensate drain is clear
- ☐ Have the cooling coils cleaned at that same visit
- ☐ Do not prune oaks from February through June
- ☐ Paint every oak wound the same day, including cuts and fresh stumps
- ☐ Clean the dryer lint filter after each load, and the vent pipe yearly
- ☐ Confirm the outdoor dryer flap opens while the dryer runs
- ☐ After a storm, check the roof and the outdoor unit from the ground

Least hazardous oak pruning: the coldest midwinter days and hot mid to late summer. Use wound or latex paint.

Summer

Change the filter while the AC runs all day, and watch the house from dry spells to hard rain.

- ☐ Change the filter more often while the AC runs all day
- ☐ Keep stored items off the outdoor unit
- ☐ In a dry spell, watch for soil pulling from the slab and new cracks
- ☐ After rain, watch standing water and downspouts at the foundation
- ☐ Check the roof from the ground after a storm
- ☐ Clear dead leaves from the roof, gutters, walls, and under decks
- ☐ Keep mulch and firewood off the walls and out from under decks

NFPA starts with the first 5 feet from the house, then 5 to 30 feet.