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TIP OF THE WEEK

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AVOIDING STORM DAMAGE TO YOUR HOME

In any season, storms can be severe, but there are ways to prepare your home to minimize the risk of damage when severe weather strikes. In some cases, taking these steps can mean the difference between costly home repairs and no storm damage to your home at all.

1. Remove Dead Wood. Trimming your trees regularly will help fewer branches fall in heavy wind or other severe weather. For particularly tall trees, experts can do the trimming for you and can also tell you when trees are at risk of being blown over in a storm so they can be removed.

2. Secure Outdoor Items. Loose items like grills, picnic tables, and lawn furniture should be brought inside to avoid becoming projectiles in storms with high winds. Decorations, even when they are securely attached to the home, could also cause damage or be destroyed in the storm.

3. Deal with Drainage Problems. Having the gutters cleaned once leaves have fallen should be a given, but there can be other drainage problems around your home, including areas where water can drain onto the foundation and cause damage. Landscaping professionals can help you identify the problems and find solutions so that you don't have issues when the storms come.

4. Inspect the Roof Periodically. A brand new roof should withstand most severe weather, but if your roof is 5-10 years old or older, it should be checked for loose shingles, nails and sheathing. Not only can shingles blow off in a storm, but loose nails and sheathing can cause chunks of roofing to be dislodged or create openings for rain and ice to penetrate.

If an inspection does turn up any possible leaks, getting them fixed right away will protect your home from damage in severe weather. Roofs that are over 15 years old risk sudden deterioration or failure in storm situations even if no problems are apparent.

5. Consider Impact-Rated Windows. You may be able to protect your windows from damage by installing hurricane shutters, or just boarding up the windows if a severe storm is

imminent. The fact is, though, that any new windows are likely to be more airtight and impervious to leaks and damage than older windows. In areas where severe weather is frequent, such as our coastal areas, it's worth considering windows that are specially made to withstand storm-level air pressure and impact.

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