

Preparing Your Home For Winter



- For homes that have crawl spaces, close the foundation vents. If the vents do not have closable flaps or covers, inexpensive "plugs" can be purchased at your local hardware store or you can make your own. Closing foundation vents saves energy and can help prevent water pipes from freezing.
- Irrigation systems, whether above or below ground, should be "blown-out" to remove water. Water at 32 degrees Fahrenheit actually expands, which, if contained in pipes that freeze, will cause the pipes to burst.
- If you leave your home for an extended period during the winter, do not shut off your heat. Take additional precautions to prevent water piping in attics, crawlspaces, and exterior walls from bursting during freezing temperatures or while on winter vacations.
- If your home has exterior hose bibs (faucets) which cannot be shut-off separate from the house water supply, install insulated bib covers to prevent freezing or replace exterior hose bibs with frost free type.
- Disconnect hoses from exterior hose bibs.
- Inspect all outside lighting fixtures and verify they operate. If you have lamps/fixtures which are bad, consider installing energy efficient lamps/fixtures.
- For photocell fixtures, clean and adjust sensitivity/delays as necessary.
- If exterior lights are on timers, verify correct time of day and recheck settings.
- Clean and install storm windows if your home has them.
- Clean and repair gutters.
- Visually inspect the roof for leaks, make any necessary repairs.
- Check operation of bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans. They should be vented directly to the outside and have backdraft dampers.
- Verify operation of mechanical ventilation system if your home is so equipped. Verify correct time of day and try to ventilate the house at the warmest part of the day (in winter), typically from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Inspect plumbing pipes in crawlspaces, attic and garage. Repair any leaks and insulate exposed hot and cold water pipes.
- Inspect heating and air-conditioning ducts for broken joints, loose or damaged insulation, and air leaks. Repair as necessary.
- If your home has a fireplace or woodstove, have the flue cleaned to remove creosote build-up which can be a potential fire hazard.
- Keep the flue damper closed during the winter when not in use.
- Have the heating system serviced by a qualified HVAC technician.
- If you have a heat pump, ensure that the outdoor unit has adequate air flow.
- If your home has baseboard heaters, be sure that no flammable objects are inside or near the heaters. Clean the heaters with a vacuum. Be sure power is off to the heaters when you do this.

For additional information contact

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