



## HOW TO WINTERIZE YOUR HOME

If you will be away from your house over the winter season, even if it is only for a couple of weeks, it is wise to prepare your home for harsh weather. Burst pipes can cause homeowners anywhere from \$5,000 and up in damages and repairs.

(If you will be staying in your home during the winter, see page 2 for tips on saving energy.)

Please follow this 9 Step winterizing checklist.

**1. Adjust your thermostat.**

Set your thermostat to between 50 and 55 degrees – do not turn it off! You want it to stay warm enough to keep your pipes from freezing.

**2. Shut off the water at the main valve.**

This will most likely be in your yard, but if you are unsure of where or how to shut it off, you can call a professional. This eliminates unwanted pressurized water from entering your home.

**3. Open all faucets, allowing water to drain from your pipes.**

After you shut down the main water supply valve (#2), allow the water remaining in the pipes to drain. This prevents water from freezing and bursting the pipes. It will also help to keep your monthly utility bill to a reasonable amount.

**4. Drain your water heater, along with your interior pipes.**

If you drain the water with a hose, you can direct it to water trees or bushes. It will also remove the sediment that collects at the bottom of your water heater, increasing efficiency.

**5. Have a technician turn off the gas line to your home.**

This service is free of charge and can be handled at the gas main on the outside of your house. Call ahead a day or two to allow for scheduling.

**6. Unplug electronics and appliances.**

To keep your electrical bills down while you are away, unplug all electronics and appliances. Don't forget to unplug the power strip for your electronics, as it draws electricity even when your devices are off.

**7. Bring in your yard furniture; disconnect garden hoses and cover hose bibs.**

Store your yard furniture and garden hoses in the garage and any other items that can become "missiles" during high winds. Cover hose bibs with cloth or Styrofoam covers found at local hardware stores.

**8. Drain your sprinkler or irrigation system.**

You may need a professional landscaper to show you how to do this.

**9. Tell your neighbors that you will be away from home.**

Notify trusted neighbors that you will be away, when you plan to return, and provide your contact information, like your phone or email. Ask them to keep an eye on your place and alert you to any unusual activity or damage.

**If you are staying home during the winter months, these tips can help you save energy.**

1. Reverse your ceiling fan so that the blades turn clockwise. This will move heat from the ceiling towards the floor.
2. Heat escapes under doors. You can purchase draft guards from \$10-20 apiece, or better yet, save money and place a rolled towel at the bottom of each door.
3. Replace your filters to improve the efficiency and longevity of your HVAC system.
4. Your chimney is a huge source of heat loss in the wintertime. When not in active use, plug it with a chimney balloon to keep drafts out and heat in. Cost: approximately \$25 – 60, depending on size.
5. Flush your water heater about once a year. Sediment can accumulate over time and affect its efficiency.