

Winterization Tips for Tenants

As the temperatures begin to drop, your home will require some low maintenance in order to keep it worry-free throughout the winter. Tenants are responsible for ensuring the safety of the home and property throughout winter by taking simple steps to prepare it for the cold and reporting any potential issues that may arise. Below are some easy tips on how to winterize your home.

1.) **Water Lines** – to prevent water lines from freezing and bursting during cold weather:

- Allow water to trickle, especially at night when the temperatures drop below 20°F.
- Disconnect and drain all garden hoses from outside faucets now or as soon as night time temps are expected to dip into the 40's.
- Always know where your water main is located in case you need to shut it off in emergencies.
- If you go on vacation, leave the heat on, set to at least 55 degrees.
- Open up all cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate and warm the pipes.

2.) **Gutters and Downspouts** – to prevent ice damming and water damage to roof and ceilings:

- Make sure that these are clear with no leaves or debris.
- Wet leaves and debris remaining in the gutter over winter adds a significant weight and volume to the gutter when frozen and increases water build-up on the roof which can freeze and create serious problems.

3.) **Chimneys and Fireplaces** – to ensure your safety and efficient operation of wood fireplaces:

- If planning to use the wood burner fireplace (please check with property manager first if you're authorized to use your wood fireplace) but don't know when the last time the chimney was cleaned it's a good idea to ask your property manager who can ask the Landlord.
- Inspect the fireplace damper for the proper opening and closing.
- Learn how to properly light a fireplace to create a draw and prevent excess smoke and CO from entering the room.

4.) **Heating and Cooling Systems** – to prevent damage to system and ensure maximum efficiency:

- Replace the a/c and furnace filters **EVERY** 30 days.
- This ensures the most efficient economical operation of your system. Clogged filters can inhibit the operation of the system and cause costly repairs which can become a tenants responsibility.
- Clean the registers throughout the unit.
- Clear obstacles such as furniture away from the vents so air can flow freely.

5.) Prepare an Emergency Kit – to ensure preparedness in case of power outages:

- Buy flashlights or battery operated lanterns for use during power shortages and keep spare batteries handy. Also, if you have a wood fireplace or stove or propane or kerosene heaters you should keep some fuel reserves on hand stored in a safe place.

6.) If vacating (moving out) during the winter months – to ensure home is handed over safely:

- Leave heat set at a minimum of 55°F (65°F if temps are below 20°F)
- Ensure furnace filter is new
- Leave a thin pencil led thick trickle of water running from kitchen faucet
- Open sink cabinet doors open to allow air to warm pipes
- Ensure all windows and doors are closed tight
- Make sure you've communicated with your property manager to let them know when you'll be handing in the keys.