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Here Comes Winter - Is Your House Ready?



Ice, snow and wind can have devastating consequences on your home. The time to winterize is when the leaves begin to turn and not when the snow begins to fall.

Winterizing Checklist For Your Home

- q Start at the top by having someone take a good look at your roof. Have it inspected for cracked or missing shingles, worn patches on shingles, missing or damaged flashing, and any other conditions that might permit water to leak through.
- q Get a routine maintenance and inspection of your heating system to make sure it is in good working order. Check for dirty filters in all your heating systems and clean or replace filters before turning the systems on.
- q If your chimney hasn't been cleaned for a while, call a chimney sweep to remove soot and creosote. Make sure to cap or screen the top of the chimney to keep out rodents and birds.
- q Check the sidewalk in front of your house and all walkways and handrails to make sure they are in good repair.
- q Make sure your snow blower and other snow removal equipment is in working order.
- q Use weather stripping around doors to prevent cold air from entering the home and caulk windows.
- q Before the first freeze, remove leaves, and debris from gutters so heavy winter rains and melting snow can flow freely and not damage your roof or walls. While you're at it, you might install gutter guards, which prevent debris from entering the gutter and direct the flow of water away from the house and into the ground.
- q If your home has a basement, consider protecting its window wells by covering them with plastic shields.
- q Trim trees and remove dead branches from around your home. Ice, snow and wind can cause weak trees or branches to break, damaging your home, car or injuring someone walking on your property.
- q Check the insulation in attics, basements and crawl spaces. Too much heat escaping can cause ice and snow to melt too fast to be carried away efficiently. If the melt off seeps into the roofing, it can cause damage or collapse. In unfinished spaces with pipes running through them, such as garages, wrap the pipes with heating tape.
- q During the winter, keep the interior of your home at 65 degrees or more. Pipes run through the walls, which can be a lot colder than the air in the rooms. Letting indoor temperatures drop below 65 degrees could risk pipes freezing behind the walls.
- q Learn where the shut-off valves are for all plumbing in your home. Including the valves within each room and the main valve. If your pipes do freeze, the more quickly you turn off the water, the less chance of pipes bursting.
- q If you are not going to be in your home this winter for an extended period of time, have the water system drained by a professional to keep pipes from freezing or bursting. Also, have someone check on your home on a regular basis. If there is a problem, it can be fixed quickly, thus lessening any damage.

