



WINTER IS COMING

Make sure you're prepared with our Winterizing Checklist!

Whether you want to save a little money on your gas bill or protect your vacant rental from major property damage, our checklist will help keep you warm and safe this winter.

Regular Home Maintenance

Even if your property remains booked throughout the winter, these tips are a great checklist to ensure the comfort and safety of your guests.

1. Replace Furnace Filters

One of the first steps in having more money for holiday gifts instead of home repairs is often easily forgotten. Regularly changing the filters in your central air and heating systems, or at a minimum cleaning them frequently during heating seasons, can be of great help in the long run, as dirty filters often restrict airflow, increase energy demand, and can even cause serious system or property damage.



2. Insulate, Insulate, Insulate

The more cold air you keep out, the more money you keep in your wallet. Key areas for insulation include attics, doorways, and - surprisingly - outlets, which can let in a decent amount of cold air. *Pro tip: Use outlet gaskets as a solution to keep them sealed.*



3. Reverse Those Fans

Fun fact: ceiling fans that cool you off after a hot day of yard work in the summer don't become useless when the lawn mower is shelved. Counterclockwise rotation produces cooling breezes while switching to a clockwise rotation actually makes a room warmer. There is a nifty switch on the fan that reverses the direction of the blades, knocking that warm air congregated at the ceiling back down into the living space. This can cut heating costs as much as 10%!



4. Schedule Your Thermostat

Another cost-effective strategy to keep you warm on a budget: simply turn down your thermostat 10+ degrees for around 8 hours a day. Grab a few extra blankets at night, and schedule your lower temps while you sleep.



Extended Vacancy Maintenance

Does your summer home remain empty as your snowbird family heads somewhere sunny during the winter? Make sure you properly prep before you leave so your property is ready to rent when you return.

1. Water Be Gone



The last thing you need to return to after a winter spent somewhere tropical is frozen or busted pipes. As you prepare to leave, shut off the main water valve, open up your faucets and drain your water lines. Shutting off your water is advised even if you're only gone for a few days. You can't be too careful: water damage is one of the leading issues our policyholders report and some of the most expensive damages to repair. Consult your plumber for extra protective steps, like applying plumbing antifreeze. Other appliances, especially your washing machine, should have its water supply turned off as well. Most over-looked faucet: the outdoor hose! Be sure to disconnect your hose before you leave for the winter.

2. Maintain The Heat



Even if no one will be keeping warm at your property for an extended time, your home still needs some warmth. It's important to keep your house above freezing temperatures to avoid property damage, especially in a region prone to severe winter storms. Many air vents are often blocked by furniture so while it may seem like a no-brainer, be sure those vents are cleared. *Pro tip: look at investing in a low-temperature thermostat to save additional money this winter.* These will keep your house at a steady 40 degrees, while your typical thermostat bottoms out at 55 degrees. Some models come with sensors that will remotely alert you if temperatures indoors get dangerously low.



3. Inspect & Protect The Outdoors

After prepping the interior for the cold, be sure to pay some attention to the exterior as well. Cleaning and clearing your gutters and roof before you leave is crucial. Major snow buildup or excessive water runoff can result in massive property or water damage. Keep animals out of your home by checking and securing entrances into the home, particularly the chimney. If you have a swimming pool, it should be sufficiently drained and covered as well.

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