



# Winter Hazard Awareness and Safety Information

## WINTER SAFETY CHECKLIST – HOME PREPAREDNESS

### WINTERIZE YOUR HOME (COMPLETE THESE STEPS DURING AUTUMN)

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- Have your heating system checked by a professional once a year to ensure safe and efficient operation that saves you money. If you heat with wood, clean your fireplace or stove and have your flue and chimney checked for cracks or creosote buildup.
- Make sure your home is properly insulated. If necessary, add insulation to walls and attics. This will conserve energy and help prevent destructive ice dams from forming.
- Caulk doors and windows to keep cold air out.
- Install double-pane windows or storm windows, or cover windows and sliding doors with plastic sheeting from the inside to provide an extra layer of insulation.
- Drain and clear sprinkler systems and outside pipes and hoses. Shut off valves to outside lines.
- If exposed water pipes are in use outside, bury or insulate them to protect them from freezing and bursting.
- If pipes do freeze, never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch.
- Know how to shut off your water valves. Keep a wrench near the valves.
- Inspect your water heater and have it flushed if necessary.
- Clean rain gutters. Leaves and other debris will hamper drainage and cause ice dams to form.
- Replace batteries in smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Make it part of your annual routine when you set your clocks back in the fall.
- Be aware of the potential for flooding when snow and ice melt. Prepare ahead of time to prevent basement leaks or deal with accumulated water.
- If possible, arrange and connect electric lights and holiday decorations before the first snow arrives. It's safer to use ladders and electricity before snow and ice are present.