



# TIPS FOR WINTERIZING YOUR HOME

Is your home prepared for winter? If you live in a region where the temperatures drop below freezing, here are some tips to help protect your home during cold spells.

## KEEP FREEZING PIPES FROM BURSTING

Frozen water in pipes causes pressure to build and could result in the pipes bursting at their weakest point.

Pipes in attics, crawl spaces and outside walls are particularly vulnerable to this concern, especially when they're subjected to extra cold air coming through utility line holes.

## FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO HELP KEEP YOUR PIPES FROM FREEZING:

- Fit exposed pipes with insulation sleeves or wrapping. The more insulation the better.
- Use caulking to seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations near water pipes.
- Disconnect garden hoses and if possible, turn off the water supply to the outdoor spigots.
- Keep cabinet doors open during cold spells to allow warm air to circulate around pipes, especially in the kitchen and bathroom.
- Allow a slow trickle of water to flow through faucets connected to pipes that run through an unheated or unprotected space.
- If you are away for an extended period of time, set the thermostat no lower than 55 degrees, ask a friend or neighbor to check on your home. If your house is going to be vacant during a cold spell, consider draining your water system.

If your pipes freeze, don't take any chances. Call a professional right away. Turn off the water supply immediately. Never try to thaw a pipe with a torch or flame and do not use electrical appliances where standing water is located.



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## PROTECT YOUR ROOF FROM ICE DAMS

When your home's heat melts snow, water runs to the edge of your roof (where the temperature is cooler) and freezes. Over time, this ice can build up, preventing drainage and forcing water into your attic or walls.

### HOW CAN YOU AVOID ICE DAMS, OR AT LEAST REDUCE THEIR IMPACT?

- Keep your attic well ventilated to outside air. The cooler the attic, the less melting and refreezing on your roof.
- Add additional soffit venting.
- Keep your attic floor well insulated to minimize the amount of heat rising through the attic from within your house.
- Block any gaps around pipes that can cause warm air to escape to your attic.

- Install an ice-dam protection sheet, a rubber membrane that sticks on the wood under the shingles. This can help on a south-facing roof where there's consistent melting.
- Remove the snow from the bottom seven to eight feet of the roof. This clears the way for the melted snow to reach the gutters and drain to the ground. But be safe: Keep your feet on the ground while using an extendable roof rake, and be careful not to come in contact with overhanging wires.
- If possible, eliminate recessed lighting near your roof. Heat generated from such lighting melts snow, which then contributes to ice dam buildup.

**Caution:** We do not advise going onto a roof yourself to correct an ice dam problem.



For more information on the tips listed, please visit the Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) at: [www.disastersafety.org](http://www.disastersafety.org)

These recommendations were developed using generally accepted safety standards. Compliance with these recommendations is not a guarantee that you will be in conformance with any building code, federal, state or local regulation regarding safety or fire. Compliance with these recommendations does not ensure the absolute safety of your occupation, business or residence. It is the property owner's duty to warn any tenants or occupants of the property of any safety hazards that may exist.



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