



GOING ON VACATION?

Don't leave your house out in the cold!

A great winter vacation can be ruined by returning home to damage caused by severe winter weather. By following a few simple tips, you can enjoy your vacation, knowing that your home is safe from old man winter!

Extended periods of freezing weather can cause hundreds of dollars worth of damage to unoccupied homes.

Water pipes are especially vulnerable to damage during cold weather. Water pipes can freeze and burst. Pipes that are most vulnerable are located in attics, crawl spaces and outside walls. There are several simple precautions homeowners can take to reduce the chances of these pipes freezing.

- Pipes that are accessible can be fitted with foam or fiberglass insulation sleeves, or wrapping. The thicker the insulation the better. It's important not to leave any gaps in the insulation that expose the pipe to cold air.
- All cracks and openings in outside walls and foundations near water pipes should be sealed with caulking. If these openings have been sealed already, check them again, as caulking can crumble with age and let in cold air.
- Keep kitchen and bath pipes exposed to warm air from your heating system by keeping cabinet doors open during periods of extreme cold.
- If you have a crawl space, make sure the outside air vents underneath the flooring are closed.
- If you return home and suspect a pipe is frozen, turn on all faucets. If a pipe has already burst, turn off the water at the main shut-off valve and call a professional plumber immediately. (Keep your faucets open until the pipe is repaired.) Never try to thaw a frozen pipe with a torch or other open flame.

Setting Your Thermostat

- Turning your home heat too far down can cost far more than you might save on your heating bill. While 50 degrees may seem like a sufficient temperature setting, the outside walls will remain substantially colder. Keeping your house at a normal night time thermostat setting is a good rule of thumb for short vacations.

By following these simple precautions, you can help keep your home safe from the ravages of winter, even when you're on vacation!