



## YOUR HOME IS AN INVESTMENT - PROTECT IT

During the winter months, it is important to take the time to keep your home safe and protected. Here are some suggestions.

### IF YOU GO AWAY

Whether you travel for business or are away on vacation, take the necessary steps to keep your home safe and protected while you are away.

- If you are leaving your home for an extended period of time, the best protection is to have the water shut off and all the water lines drained.
- If you leave your water on, set your thermostat above 55 degrees. This temperature is warm enough to keep pipes from freezing but low enough so you are not heating an empty home.
- To keep out wind and wind-driven rain, close and lock all doors, windows, skylights, and vents.
- Unplug appliances such as the toaster, coffee maker, microwave oven, computers, and televisions.
- Put interior and exterior lights on timers and/or motion sensors. Set the timers on staggered hours to turn lights on and off at different times. Install tapered deadbolt locks on entry doors.
- Stop mail service and newspaper deliveries.



### TIPS FOR THE COLD WEATHER MONTHS

*During the winter months, burst pipes and ice dams can cause extensive damage to your home. A few simple steps can minimize the potential for ruined carpets and water damage to ceilings and walls.*

#### Prevent Pipes from Freezing:

- Pipes in attics, crawl spaces and outside walls are particularly vulnerable to freezing in extremely cold weather.
- Fit exposed pipes with insulation sleeves or wrapping to slow the heat transfer. The more insulation the better.
- Seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations near water pipes with caulking.
- Keep cabinet doors open during cold spells to allow warm air to circulate around pipes (particularly in the kitchen and bathroom).
- Keep a slow trickle of water flowing through faucets connected to pipes that run through an unheated or unprotected space.

#### Prevent Ice Dams:

An ice dam is an accumulation of ice at the lower edge of a sloped roof, usually at the gutter. When interior heat melts the snow on the roof, the water will run down and refreeze at the roof's edge, where temperatures are much cooler.

Eventually, the ice builds up and blocks water from draining off of the roof. This, in turn, forces the water under the roof covering and into your attic or down the inside walls of your house. Once an ice dam forms, the potential damage can be serious. Take these steps now to avoid trouble later:

- Keep the attic well ventilated. The colder the attic, the less melting and refreezing on the roof.
- Keep the attic floor well insulated to minimize the amount of heat rising through the attic from within the house.