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NF91-13 Winter Home Shutdown

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Winter Home Shutdown

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Homeowners planning to leave their residence for several winter months should take precautions to prevent damage to their possessions from freezing temperatures. When it is possible to have someone make regular checkups, do a partial close-up leaving the heating, plumbing, and electrical systems operating. The thermostat for a heating system should be set at its lowest setting (usually 45-55 degrees F), which will prevent freezing of water pipes but use minimum fuel. Leave internal doors open to promote air circulation and even temperature. A little heat in the house also maintains the humidity at a more constant level, causing less swelling and shrinking later in wood floors, cabinet work and furniture. Thermal expansion and contraction can crack painted surfaces and hurt delicate joinery on woodwork or fine furniture.

Water heaters should be turned off and drained for long absences. After draining the water heater, attach a sign indicating that it should not be turned on again until refilled.

There are several reasons you may want to consider leaving the electrical system operating. First, timers can be set to operate lights in the house to give the impression it is occupied and reduce the chance of burglaries. Second, appliances such as freezers can continue to operate rather than be emptied. It will also be easier for someone checking your house to make a more thorough inspection if lighting is available.

The alternative to a partial close-up is a full close-up. In this case, the heat will be turned off, the water turned off at the main valve and the plumbing drained. In some newer houses, especially those with exposed basement walls, there must be sufficient heat in the basement to prevent the earth behind the walls from freezing; otherwise, the foundation walls may be pushed in by frost action.

If you have a well, open the valves and let the supply line drain back down into the well. Make sure your water tank and pump are also drained. If your water comes from a municipal supply, see if you can have it shut off at the curb by the supplier. If that is not possible, disconnect your plumbing at the main valve, and wrap the valve and the supply line securely with insulation.

Draining the water system of a home may be best done by a plumber, but you can do it with a bit of

work. Start by turning off your water supply at the main shutoff valve, which should be located just inside your house at the point where your water supply comes into the house. Next, flush all toilets and open all faucets. Homes with water pumps need special attention, since the pump system may have to be cleared of water.

Underneath every sink, tub, shower, and floor drain, open and drain the traps. Your dishwasher may empty into the trap under the kitchen sink. The clothes washer is likely to have its own trap, which needs to be drained separately. Also check for low spots in horizontal pipes. If these sections do not drain properly on their own, you will have to take them apart and drain them by hand. Compressed air can be applied at a faucet to force the water out at the nearest or lowest opening.

Once you have drained everything, pour a cup of glycerin automotive antifreeze down every drain in the house. (Do this after reclosing all the traps.) Add at least a quart of antifreeze to each toilet.

Your major appliances need winterizing, too, if you are vacating the house for a long period of time. The chart on the next page provides winterizing directions.

Materials on specific appliances from the appliance Information Service of Whirlpool Corporation are incorporated. January, 1991.

WINTERIZING

<p>OVENS</p> <p>Microwave, electric or gas ranges</p>	<p>Disconnect electric power Turn off valve on gas range. Leave flexible gas line attached. Clean interior with special attention to areas around door. Clean exterior. Check use and care guides for recommended cleaners. Protect with dustcover.</p>
<p>CLOTHES DRYERS</p>	<p>Disconnect electric power. Clean interior, exterior and the lint screen. Turn off valve on gas dryer. Leave flexible gas line attached.</p>
<p>CLOTHES WASHERS</p>	<p>Clean thoroughly. Turn off water supply hose and disconnect fill hose only. Pour 1 quart of permanent automobile-type antifreeze into washer tub. Set washer for drain and spin and run for at least 30 seconds to mix antifreeze with water left in the washer. Disconnect electric power and the drain hose. Put a sign on the washer as a reminder that it contains antifreeze and must be conditioned and flushed before next use. To condition for use: reconnect hoses/electric power. Set washer for normal cycle and low, hot water fill. Add 1 cup detergent. Run washer through a complete cycle (No Load) to condition it and remove antifreeze. This is a good time to check leaks at hose connections.</p>

<p>DISHWASHERS</p> <p>Portable and built-in</p>	<p>Disconnect electric power and turn off water supply. Disconnect water supply lines attached to either side of water inlet valve (see operating or installation instructions). Drain these lines into a bucket. Disconnect drain hose from the side of the pump and motor assembly. Use a bucket; about 1/2 quart of water will drain out.</p> <p>Place a note on dishwasher as a reminder that hoses have been disconnected and must be reconnected before next use.</p> <p>To condition for use: reconnect drain and inlet lines; turn on water supply. Connect electric power. Add 1 quart of water to inside of tub and look under dishwasher for leaks. Add detergent and run empty dishwasher through a short cycle to clean it and check for operation.</p>
<p>REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS</p>	<p>Refrigerators: disconnect water supply at appliance. Drain all water tubing before packing (see use and care guide or installation instructions for details about each step).</p> <p>Ice Makers: Clean drain pan and wrap.</p> <p>Freestanding Ice Makers: see use and care guide before proceeding. Remove grill; disconnect water supply at appliance; drain. Remove water pan drain plug (located beneath water pump pan); drain and dry thoroughly. Before using again, clean and sanitize according to instructions.</p>
<p>DEHUMIDIFIERS</p>	<p>Disconnect electric power.</p> <p>Air conditioner installed through wall or window; clean to remove foreign matter such as leaves; cover any parts exposed to the outside.</p> <p>Remove front cover (inside house) and insert plastic sheet to reduce air passage. Allow a small amount of air circulation at bottom to prevent moisture build-up, condensation and mildew.</p> <p>Dehumidifiers; clean; remove water; dry cabinet interior. Store appliance in an upright position rather than on its top, side or back.</p>
<p>TRASH COMPACTORS</p>	<p>Unplug power cord or disconnect from power supply. Lock compactor control to OFF, remove key and store it in safe, convenient place . . . out of the reach of children.</p>

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