

Winterizing Your Home: Essential Tips for Snowbirds and Sellers

As winter approaches, it's critical to prepare your home's water system to avoid costly damage caused by freezing temperatures. Whether you're heading south for the winter or selling your home, following these best practices can save you from major headaches down the road.

For Snowbirds: How to Winterize Your Water System

If you plan to be away for an extended period during the winter, it's essential to decide how to handle your home's water system. You have two main options:

1. Shut Off Your Water Completely

The safest method for protecting your home is shutting off the water supply and draining the pipes. To do this:

- **Turn off the main water valve** where the water enters your home.
- **Open faucets** and **flush toilets** to clear any remaining water in the system.
- Consider pouring a small amount of non-toxic antifreeze into drains to prevent freezing in U-bend traps.
- Notify your water district if you need assistance with this process or require the service to be turned off at the street.

2. Keep Water Running with a Set Thermostat

If you prefer to leave your water on:

- **Set your thermostat** to at least 55°F to keep the indoor temperature warm enough to prevent freezing pipes.
- Open cabinet doors in kitchens and bathrooms to allow warm air to circulate around the plumbing.
- Consider installing a smart thermostat for remote monitoring, giving you peace of mind while you're away.

For Homeowners Selling During the Winter

If you're selling your home during the winter, here are a few extra steps to prevent water damage, especially if the house will be vacant:

- **Shut off the water** if no one will be living there. This helps prevent any risk of burst pipes during unexpected cold snaps.

- **Notify your water district** if you plan to shut off the water completely. District personnel will shut off your water at the Property Shut-Off Valve (PSOV). This will ensure accurate billing (one free turn on and turn off per year) and help us monitor your property for any issues.
- If the house remains on the market, ensure that a thermostat is set properly or arrange for someone to check on the property periodically to avoid winter hazards.

Worst-Case Scenario: What Happens if You Don't Winterize

Failing to winterize your home can lead to burst pipes, which are not only inconvenient but also expensive. When water freezes, it expands, creating pressure on your pipes, which can cause them to crack or burst. If this happens, the resulting water damage can lead to:

- **Flooding** in your home
- Damaged drywall, flooring, and furniture
- Expensive repairs that could cost upwards of \$10,000 or more, depending on the severity

Taking preventive steps to winterize your home, or informing the water district if you need assistance, can help you avoid these costly disasters.

Reach Out for Help

If you have questions about how to best winterize your water system or need assistance with shutting off your water, don't hesitate to contact our office at 719-687-7937. We're here to help ensure your home stays safe and protected all winter long.