

PREPARATION FOR COLDER WEATHER

Dear Residents:

Cold weather will soon be upon us, so we'd like to share a checklist that will help keep your heat bills down this winter and make your home warmer and safer for you and your family. Planning ahead can save you money and frustration. Keep in mind that according to the lease agreement, any preventable damages (such as freezing pipes) is your responsibility. So we want you to take all necessary precautions to avoid any unnecessary costs.

OUTSIDE PREPARATION

- ❖ Check and close all the vents/windows to the basement/crawl space.
- ❖ Unhook your garden hoses.
- ❖ Prevent water lines from freezing by wrapping exterior pipes. *Even newspapers covered with a waterproof material works.*

When the temperature forecast is for extreme cold weather, leave outside faucets running slightly (a small, steady stream of water) but don't allow outside faucets to flow in the street onto sidewalks and other areas where people may walk.

- ❖ Check to insure that the caulking around the outside windows and any weather-stripping around frames are still in place to stop cold air.
- ❖ Don't forget to close storm windows. Make sure storm chains, if present, are attached on any storm doors. This prevents strong winds from blowing the door off or damaging the door.
- ❖ Keep the gutters cleaned out. If they are clogged with leaves, the water will overflow and cause the house to rot or back up under the roof and into the house.

INSIDE PREPARATION

- ❖ Make sure the heat never goes below 50 degrees, even when you are not at home. If the temperature is forecast to drop below freezing leave at least one inside faucet dripping lukewarm water so that both hot and cold pipes are involved.
- ❖ During periods of cold weather, leave cupboard doors open in the kitchen and bathrooms so that pipes inside will be exposed to heat.

If you will be away for more than two consecutive days this winter, please let us know at least one week in advance, so we can check on your property if a sudden freeze occurs. We also want to be able to reach you in case of an emergency.

If you have central heat/air, changing or cleaning the filters monthly can make a big difference in your energy bills. Make sure the attic access door is in place. If you have a fireplace, please clean it. Chimneys need to be cleaned yearly or a chimney fire may occur. Call a professional to do a complete job and check the safety of the chimney.

Test your smoke alarm(s). There are more fires in the winter, and the smoke alarm is one of

your best safety features. If you don't have one, or it doesn't work, let us know. Make sure your smoke alarms have a battery and are working. You might also want to consider buying a small fire extinguisher for you kitchen and garage.

Again, this is important for your safety and your family. Should pipes freeze, don't use open flames to thaw out lines. This may catch the house on fire, or worse, create an explosion caused by expanding steam between two plugs of ice. Pipes don't always burst the first time they freeze. However, should a pipe burst, locate your water shut-off valve quickly turn off. If you don't know where the shut-off valve is, let us know now, before any problems occur. If the pipe break is a hot water line, close valve on the top of the water heater. If you think a plumber needs to be called, please use the plumber approved by us.

We greatly appreciate your efforts in helping to make sure your residence is kept warm and as safe as possible during the upcoming winter months. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Management