CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PLUMBING & HEATING
L'INSTITUT CANADIEN DE PLOMBERIE ET DE CHAUFFAGE

HOW TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY AND HOME SAFE IN EXTREME COLD WEATHER

January 7, 2014

When the temperature drops significantly it can do damage to your home and lifestyle, and it is about much more than just freezing pipes. Here are a few tips from the Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating (CIPH) to help you prepare for and manage during times like these

- Locate your main water shut off and test it to make sure it is working properly.
- Keep items like snow shovels, ice melt and a flash lights handy in case of storm or utility outage.
- Have your chimney inspected by a chimney sweep to make sure it is ready to use.
- Make sure your downspouts are draining 5-10 feet away from your home. You can use 4" black corrugated drain pipe. This will help keep water away from your foundation, driveway and sidewalks. Freezing water can cause hydraulic pressure and result in cracks.
- Shut off outside faucets. Remove water hoses that may be attached. Once you shut the valve off inside, it is a good idea to open the valve outside to let any water run out.
- Test your sump pump to make sure it is working properly in case of a pipe burst.
- Clean your gutters to prevent icicles and dams. When the ice melts it can work its way up between the shingles and roof sheathing causing water damage to your roof.
- Check your roof for damaged, loose or missing shingles. This can also lead to damage due to snow and ice melting.
- If you notice snow melting off your roof faster than other roofs in your area you may need to have a contractor check the amount of insulation in your attic.
- Have your heating system serviced by a licensed contractor. The contractor will clean the system, make sure it is running efficiently, and has no carbon monoxide leakage.
- Drain your lawn irrigation system, if you have one.
- For cottage or seasonal / permanent trailers- make sure your foundation vents are closed if you have a crawl space. This helps keep cold winds out from under your home which results in energy loss and protects from pipe freezing.
- Have exterior caulking around windows and doors. If the crack is the thickness of a nickel or more use a good silicone which will not shrink or crack. Clear caulking works well and tends to look better than white or other colors if you don't have a lot of experience.
- Install weather stripping around doors that don't seal well. Also install a new door sweep at the bottom if the old one is torn or in bad condition.
- Install a window insulation kit which consist of thin plastic sheathing and a double sided tape to the interior trim around windows to help prevent drafty window energy loss.
- If you have emptied your water heater prior to the freezing, make sure you refill it BEFORE you turn the power back on.
- If you suspect your pipes will be freezing, let the water run for 1 minute to remove potential freezing water and replenish pipes with new water.

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