

Winterizing Your Home: Thinking of Water Conservation and Damage Prevention

It's certain to say that anyone who's lived in Iowa for any extended period of time has experienced the freezing cold and bone-chilling winters.

Winterizing your home is not only about conserving water but also safeguarding your property from potential damage caused by freezing temperatures. Homeowners and renters alike can take specific steps to mitigate the risk of frozen pipes and reduce water-related costs during the winter months. In times of drought, the emphasis shifts to water conservation. Making small changes and implementing these measures, can ensure a well-protected and water-efficient home.

HOMEOWNERS: Protecting Your Investment

⇒ **Insulate Pipes and Plumbing Fixtures:** Start by insulating exposed pipes in unheated areas of your home, such as the basement, attic, or crawl spaces. Use pipe insulation or heating tape to prevent freezing. Insulating plumbing fixtures, such as outdoor faucets, can also protect them from the cold.

⇒ **Seal Leaks and Cracks:** Cold air can easily find its way into your home through gaps and cracks. Inspect windows, doors, and any openings in your home's exterior for leaks. Seal them with weatherstripping or caulk to keep the cold air out and the warm air in, reducing the risk of freezing pipes.

⇒ **Protect Outdoor Water Sources:** Disconnect and drain hoses and shut off outdoor water sources. Consider installing frost-free hose bibs to prevent freezing. Insulating outdoor faucets with covers can provide an extra layer of protection.

⇒ **Maintain a Consistent Temperature:** Keep your home heated consistently, even when you're away. Set the thermostat to a minimum temperature to ensure that the interior remains warm enough to prevent freezing. This is crucial for vacant properties or vacation homes.

⇒ **Consider installing a Water Leak Alarm:** These alarms are designed to detect and alert homeowners to potential water leaks or flooding, providing an early warning system that can help prevent extensive damage and costly repairs.

RENTERS: Taking Precautions without Ownership

⇒ **Communicate with the Landlord:** Renters should establish open communication with their landlords regarding winterization efforts. Ensure that the landlord is aware of any existing issues or concerns and inquire about any specific actions they plan to take to winterize the property.

⇒ **Implement Temporary Fixes:** While you may not have control over major structural changes, there are still steps renters can take. Use weatherstripping on windows and doors, install draft stoppers, and make use of heavy curtains to insulate against the cold.

⇒ **Use Space Heaters Cautiously:** If your rental property is inadequately heated, consider using space heaters. However, exercise caution and follow safety guidelines to prevent fire hazards. Also, discuss any plans to use space heaters with your landlord to ensure compliance with the lease agreement.

If you have questions about winterizing your home against potential water loss or damage, please reach out to the team at Osceola Water Works at 641-342-1435, or contact Brandon Patterson, Water Superintendent at osceolawater2@windstream.net.