

## PREPARATION FOR COLDER WEATHER

Dear Residents,

Cold weather will soon be falling on us and 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. As per your rental agreement any preventable damage (such as freezing pipes) is the tenant's responsibility.

### OUTSIDE PREPARATION

- \_\_\_\_\_ Check and close all the vents to the crawl space under the building.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unhook your garden hoses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prevent water lines from freezing by wrapping exterior pipes; newspapers covered with a waterproof material works.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When the temperature forecast drops below freezing leave outside faucets running slightly (a small steady stream of water). But don't allow outside faucets to flow into the street or onto sidewalks and other areas where people may walk. 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 quickly at the main valve. (If you don't know where the shut-off is, let us know now, before any trouble occurs.) If the pipe break is a hot water line, close valve on the top of the water heater also. A plumber may need to be called. Please use plumber(s) previously approved by us.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check to insure that the caulking around the outside windows and any weatherstripping around door frames is 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 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 bathroom 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 rental if a sudden freeze occurs. We also want to be able to reach you in case of an emergency.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Changing the heating/air filters monthly can make a big difference in your bills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure the attic access door is in place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you have a fireplace or a wood stove, the chimney needs to be cleaned each year. Chimney fires are common if this is not done. Call a professional who can do a complete job and also 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. This is important for your family's safety. Make sure your smoke alarms have a battery and they are working. You might want to consider buying a small fire extinguisher for your kitchen and garage.

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