

Winterize your Condo

Follow these steps when cold weather approaches:

- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.
- When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe--even at a trickle--helps prevent pipes from freezing because the temperature of the water running through it is above freezing.
- Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
- Locate your water main in the event you need to shut it off in an emergency.
- If you will be going away during the cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55°F. You are part of a larger community and your system being off with severe weather in your absence could allow pipes to freeze. This could cause thousands of dollars of property damage to you and your neighbors.
- Consider is turning off water to toilets, sinks, washing machines, icemakers and dishwashers. These items are served with a supply line that is the weakest component and is where most of the water leaks occur. A small icemaker line running continuously for days or weeks on end can cause major water damage not only to your unit but the units around you.

Check all weather stripping on doors and windows.

A major source of conditioned air loss is through the doors and windows of your unit. Inspect the weather stripping around doors and windows for breaks or misalignments. When the door is closed the weather stripping should touch the entire outside of the door. Windows should have weather stripping when closed that should touch the entire length of the window against the window seal.

Check thresholds on all doors

Thresholds are the section of the door you have to slightly step over to come in from the outside. It either has a rubber surface that is stationary or a

rubber sweep that attaches to the bottom of the door. This is a critical part of the door system that not only keeps out rain and keeps in conditioned air but it also keeps unwanted pests from being able to crawl into your unit.

Check your Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning unit (HVAC)

The best time to do a system check is just prior to a change in the season. Have a maintenance professional check the furnace portion of your HVAC to make sure it is functioning properly and not a potential fire hazard. Service contracts are available to check these systems twice a year (spring and fall). Make sure your filters are changed and air is flowing freely through these. This can boost your unit's performance significantly.

Check your condensate drain

Pour a cup of bleach down the condensate drain pipe. This will eliminate the mold that can grow all winter and eliminate the issues in spring with your condensation overflowing from A/C usage.

Flush your water heater

Water heaters are holding tanks where sediment can build up and never get out. Sediment buildup can cause premature failure of the water heater components. Flushing the system can make sure your system is at its optimum performance.

- Check the pop-off valve on your water heater for correct operation. This is located at the side top of the water heater. It has a small handle and is there to automatically release hot water if the internal pressure builds to dangerous levels. When activated it should start a small flow of water and stop when released. If it is not working call a professional immediately to have it replaced.
- If you travel in the winter remember to turn your water heater to the lowest setting,