

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Winterizing Your Home

Tips To Save Money And Prevent Headaches

(NAPSA)—Winter preparation needn't be a blizzard of work but it should be part of a seasonal routine. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Check the smoke detectors—more fires occur in the winter than any other time of year.
- Change your furnace filters.
- Before using your fireplace, be sure it's clean with no soot or carbon buildup in the chimney.
- Be sure candles aren't too close to the walls.

Other things you should keep in mind:

- Keep your furnace elements clean. If they aren't, puffbacks can occur. Puffbacks of very oily soot blow throughout the HVAC system. Cleaning it up need not be difficult but must be done properly. For best results: Don't try to wash soot off of flat painted walls—doing so can make it dirtier, and don't touch light-colored furniture or the soot may set in deeper.

- To prevent pipes from freezing during severe cold snaps, open cabinet doors to let air circulate.

- If you're using a space heater, be sure you have proper ventilation, and keep it away from drapes and other flammable items.

- Look for ice dams on the roof. When snow melts into rain gutters, then freezes, it can shove ice under the shingles and cause room for water to seep into the home.

- Keep live Christmas trees



Fireplaces aren't the only potential cause of wintertime smoke and fire hazards—furnace puffbacks, holiday decorations, candles and space heaters are common culprits too.

watered to prevent them from drying out.

- If you intend to head south until Spring or otherwise leave your home for a long time, Peter Duncanson, disaster restoration expert at ServiceMaster Clean, recommends following these precautionary tips for winterizing your home:

- Be sure your heating system is in proper working order so pipes don't freeze while you're gone.

- Drain the water system. Turn off the main water supply to the house, then open water faucet valves inside your home to let whatever water is inside run out.

For more tips and information, visit www.servicemasterclean.com.

Peter Duncanson, Director of Disaster Restoration Training for ServiceMaster Clean.