

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Survival Tips For Colder Weather

(NAPSA)—There are many simple steps homeowners can take to protect their homes and lower energy bills during the colder months.

Here are a few easy tips from the experts at Lowe's:

- **Protect your pipes.** To prevent freezing, insulate exposed interior pipes typically found in unfinished basements and install cold-weather faucet covers on exterior faucets. Insulation comes in different materials, lengths and diameters and is precut for easy installation. There's no need to remove the insulation after winter because it helps reduce the energy used to warm water.

- **Keep pipes from bursting.** When pipes freeze, water only trickles out or won't come out at all when a faucet is turned on. Turn off the water at the main shutoff valve immediately to prevent water-pipe bursting—a major source of flooding.

- **Optimize heating by plugging drafts.** "To prepare for the cold months of winter, it is easy and affordable to insulate and seal the sources of air drafts, which can save up to 20 percent on heating and cooling costs," said Bill Dodd, vice president of merchandising for Lowe's. "To test for leaky windows, place a playing card into the crevice of an outside door or window; if it fits, you need to reseal your windows with caulk."

Also, remember to change furnace filters frequently. Clogged filters reduce airflow through the heating/cooling system, forcing the unit to work harder and less efficiently.

- **After a snowfall, save your back.** Snow throwers can clear most surfaces in a fraction of the time required by shoveling with much less effort. Single-stage



**Among the simple things you can do yourself to keep your house warmer and save energy includes sealing the sources of air drafts.**

throwers are best used on small driveways, sidewalks and patios where snowfall is 7 inches or less.

- **Storm recovery.** Following a storm, check your home for physical damage. Always wear proper safety equipment such as heavy boots, gloves and safety goggles when clearing away fallen tree limbs and other debris. Stay away from downed or dangling power lines.

Ensure your chain saw is equipped with an anti-kickback chain that is well sharpened.

- **Generator safety.** Use portable generators outdoors in a well-ventilated area. Carbon monoxide produced by the engine can be deadly, so use a carbon monoxide detector to protect your family members.

- **Storm survival kit.** When bad weather strikes, it's important to be prepared. You can create a winter storm survival kit in advance for less than \$100. The kit should include a first-aid kit, a flashlight or 12-hour safety light stick, batteries, a two-way radio with weather band, a snow shovel, ice melt and blankets.

For more tips, visit [lowes.com](http://lowes.com).