



**ShelterPride**

## **Seasonal Plumbing Safety Tips**

### **Fall Plumbing Tips**

Chilly fall temperatures serve as a polite reminder that when winter arrives it can be sudden, often leaving homeowners unprepared for the troubles associated with extreme cold.

- Make sure outside faucets aren't dripping or leaking. Make the necessary repairs or call a plumber before freezing temperatures arrive. Be aware that when pipes freeze, water pressure builds causing cracks - no matter if the pipe is made of plastic, copper or steel. Even a tiny crack can unleash more than 250 gallons of water in a single day.
- Disconnect outside water hoses. If left connected, water in the hoses can freeze and expand causing faucets and connecting pipes inside your home to freeze and break.
- If your home is equipped with interior shut-off valves leading to outside faucets, close them and drain water from lines.
- Cover outside faucets using a faucet insulation kit.
- Insulate pipes in unheated areas, such as garages or crawl spaces. Apply heat tape or thermostat-controlled heat cables around pipes that are exposed and prone to freezing.
- Your water heater works harder during winter months. Flush it out and remove sediment buildup, which causes corrosion, shortens life span and reduces heating efficiency. Drain several gallons from the faucet near the bottom of the tank. Connect a hose to the faucet and direct water into a nearby drain.
- Carefully test the water heater's pressure relief valve (Danger: water is very hot) by lifting up on the lever and letting it snap back. The valve should allow a burst of hot water into the drainpipe. If not, call a professional to have a new valve installed.

### **Winter Plumbing Tips**

Holidays bring together family, friends and a few plumbing emergencies. Holiday parties mean extra guests - and these extra guests put a serious strain on a home's plumbing system.

- Never put hard-to-grind, stringy, fibrous waste into the garbage disposer (poultry skins, carrots, celery, pumpkin pulp or banana peels). The disposer can't sufficiently grind these items and they will clog your sink drain.
- Avoid pouring fats or cooking oils down the drain because liquid fats solidify in the pipes and create clogs. Wipe congealed grease from pots.
- Run cold water down the drain for about 15 seconds before and after using the garbage disposer to flush waste down the main line.
- Turn on the disposer before adding food debris.
- Plan ahead, spread out showers throughout the day; wait 10 minutes between showers rather than taking one right after another.

**\* We recommend that any plumbing maintenance and/or repairs be handled by a licensed plumber.**



### Other Tips

- **Bathrooms.** Check caulking around tubs and shower stalls to ensure that a watertight seal is maintained. To reduce moisture, use an exhaust fan or open a window while showering.
- **Basement.** Periodically inspect your foundation walls and floors for cracks that might allow water seepage, especially if you live in an older home or an area with poor soil drainage. Avoid storing valuables in your basement. For household supplies and other inexpensive items, use storage racks or shelves to elevate items several inches above the floor.
- **Attics** Ensure there is adequate ventilation in all attic and overhang areas to prevent leaks.

### Protecting Your Home's Exterior

- **Roof.** Missing, worn or broken roofing materials may allow water to penetrate and deteriorate the roof structure. Inspect your roof periodically, especially after severe storms. Contact a licensed roofer for further evaluation and repairs.
- **Roof Flashing.** Flashing is located at the intersection of all roof and wall lines, as well as along chimneys and roof valleys. Flashings may separate from adjacent surfaces and allow water to leak inside. A licensed roofer can inspect these areas and make necessary repairs.
- **Ice Damming.** If you live in a cold climate, ice may form under snow that accumulates on the roof and overhangs. This can cause water to backup and leak into your attic and home. To prevent this, be sure there is adequate ventilation in all attics and overhang areas.

### Other Exterior Areas

- **Gutters/Downspouts.** If you live in a wooded area, falling leaves may clog the gutters and lead to water backup that could damage your exterior siding. In late fall, have all gutters and downspouts cleared of leaves and debris.
- **Grade of Property.** Soil should be graded from the foundation so that water flows away from the house during heavy rain or snow.
- **Window Wells.** Check basement window wells to ensure that they are clear of leaves and other debris. Consider installing window well covers.
- **Windows/Doors.** Inspect windows and exterior doors for proper caulking and weather stripping.
- **Exterior Paint/Siding.** Periodically check for peeling and cracking.
- **Terraces/Balconies.** Regularly inspect terraces and balconies. Old or inferior flashing at the intersection of an outdoor terrace or balcony, located above a living area with a vertical exterior wall, can cause water leakage during heavy rain or wind.
- **Exterior Drains.** Regularly remove all leaves and other debris from exterior patio drains.



### **Protecting Vacation/Seasonal Homes**

At the end of the vacation season or when you close your seasonal/vacation home for a length of time, shut off the water and have all water pipes drained by a licensed plumber. The plumber should also inspect all water lines, the water heater and appliances that use water.