

WINTERIZATION

When freezing or subfreezing temperatures hit Northwest Washington or Whatcom County, plumbing systems are at high risk of severe damage due to frozen or burst pipes.

As a tenant, it's essential that you take proactive steps to protect your rental unit. Our rental agreement states that tenants are expected to care for the home as if it were their own and may be held responsible for damages resulting from negligence.

Fortunately, most cold-weather issues can be avoided with a **few simple precautions**:

SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS

1. Always keep your heat set to a minimum of 60-65 degrees. Turning the heat off or too low during the cold and freezing weather is considered negligence if any issues arise, so it's important that your heat is maintained, even if you are away for a while.
2. If you are leaving for an extended period, arrange for someone to check in periodically and run some water out of all the pipes. During a serious cold spell, please leave a steady trickle of water running from all faucets to ensure they do not freeze. Leave cabinet doors open below kitchen and bathroom sinks to allow the room heat to circulate around the fixtures.
3. Keep all interior doors to adjoining rooms open so that the heated air can circulate throughout the residence.
4. Make sure that the crawl space vents on the outside of your dwelling are covered. This helps keep the cold air from getting to the pipes and keeps your floors warmer. These vents can be purchased at any hardware store for a nominal price. Vents need to be removed in the spring. *If you live in a large apartment complex, management will take care of installing the vent covers. If you live in a single-family home, the responsibility of the vent covers will be yours. Reach out to your management team if you have any questions.
5. Exterior garden hoses hooked up to dwellings must be disconnected and drained. Outside faucets must be protected and drained so they will not freeze.
6. Clean or replace furnace filters regularly to ensure your heating system runs efficiently and keeps your home warm during cold weather.
7. Pipes in most dwellings run through walls and ceilings. If they freeze and break, please remember that damage to your personal belongings is not covered by the Owner's property insurance or tenant liability insurance as these strictly cover the building. If you would like to ensure your personal belongings are covered, consider a renters insurance policy.

Finally, REMEMBER, if you leave for any period (ex. winter break), DO NOT turn off the heat or shut off the circuit breaker. Taking these precautions seriously can help you avoid costly damage, maintain a comfortable living environment, and stay in compliance with your rental agreement.
