

SUGGESTED TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR WINTER 2009-2010

There are steps that should be taken in the fall to make sure your home is prepared for the winter and the harsh weather conditions that can occur in Sussex County near the beach. Wind is a serious consideration.

OUTSIDE

- Secure all outside items – deck/lawn furniture, grills, etc.
- Cover/wrap tender shrubs and other plantings

ROOF AND GUTTERS

- Trim back all tree limbs – none should touch the roof
- Remove all debris from the gutters and downspouts

WATER HEATER

- Do an annual inspection of your water heater – this includes having the tank pressure and temperature relief valve checked
- Drain two (2) gallons of water from the bottom of the tank to remove sediment to improve heat transfer and provide more efficiency

WASHING MACHINE

- When home is unoccupied, shut off water

DRYER

- Clean out the lint filter on your machine every load and be sure to check and clean the outside vent occasionally

HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEM

- Home should be kept at a minimum of 55 degrees during winter months to prevent pipes from freezing when unit is not occupied
- Forced warm air system – check the exhaust vent and air shutter openings for dirt/dust. Clean any lint/dirt from blower blades, and motor - If you have a gas heater clean any dust/dirt from motor and burner.
- Vacuum air passages
- Check and replace if needed, all fan belts
- Wash the reusable filter or replace if it is disposable – a clean filter will help prevent airborne dust from circulating through your home
- There are many good companies in this area that provide HAVAC services and have annual maintenance contracts available. An annual contract is a good idea, especially as the systems age and for those that are not permanent residents.

DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Check doors and windows to be sure they are properly sealed
- Repair and replace weather stripping around doors and windows where needed
- Check for loose or missing glazing putty and caulking that may have deteriorated.
- Install your storm windows if stored

WATER PIPES

- Be sure all pipes in unheated areas are protected – wrap pipes with heating tape, or insulation and duct tape, or by encasing with preformed plastic foam.
- Check pipes for cracks and leaks
- Hoses **MUST** be removed from “frost-free” spigots to prevent breaks

FIREPLACE

- Before using your fireplace make sure it is in good working order
- Clean the chimney flue, inspect carefully and have repaired if needed – check the seal on the flue – replace the seal if it is loose or damaged

SMOKE DETECTOR

- Make sure your smoke detector is in good working order

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

- Recommended that you have a Class A/B/C fire extinguisher readily available in your home

If you do your own home maintenance, remember to disconnect the power for any electrical or gas systems BEFORE starting. Also before proceeding with any maintenance, check your owner’s manuals for proper instructions.

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