



# WINTER MAINTENANCE

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## SNOW & ICE REMOVAL

In most areas, YOU are responsible for promptly removing snow & ice if necessary. Let us know if you will need assistance.

## OUR NEW WEBSITE

Coming soon to a computer near you! JANUARY 2016

## WINTERIZING YOUR HOME

**WINTER IS ALMOST HERE!** Now is the time to winterize all homes, condos, and townhouses. A few simple steps will help make the seasonal transition as smooth as possible.

There are a few winter items you are responsible for, which we've listed below.

**HEATING SYSTEM CHECK:** The time to check your heat is in the Fall (now). Start by giving your system a test run. Turn your thermostat to heat mode and set it at 80 degrees for testing purposes to make sure it is running properly. If you have a gas furnace, make sure the pilot light is always lit. If you ever smell gas, call your gas provider immediately. Changing furnace filters is also important. Replace furnace filters once a month during the heating season. Dirty filters restrict air flow and increase energy demand. Do not store any flammable materials or contents near or around your heating system or water heater. If a repair is needed for your home's heating system, please submit a maintenance request or contact your tenant liaison.

**CHIMNEYS & FIRE PLACES:** Check that the chimney is clear of any nests from birds, squirrels, or other small animals. The chimney draft should be tested to ensure fire and smoke will draw upwards. A professional chimney cleaning and service aids in this measure. Also, make sure that the flu damper opens and closes fully, and that it is able to lock in the open and closed position. If you have a gas log fireplace, it will need its pilot light lit and system cleaned. Always make sure the flu/damper is open before lighting a fire.

**SMOKE DETECTORS:** If you didn't check your smoke detectors during fall maintenance this is the time to check. Make sure your smoke detector is in proper working order and replace the batteries. If your smoke detector does not work and you have replaced the batteries, please call us to schedule a service appointment.

**TRAVELING DURING THE HOLIDAY:** If you go on holiday for any period of time during the winter season, please be sure to leave the heat on and set the temperature at a minimal of 60 degrees. Also, leave a water faucet on at a slow drip in the home to help prevent pipes from freezing. Let us know if you're going to be out of town.

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"We feel cold, but we don't mind it, because we will not come to harm. And if we wrapped up against the cold, we wouldn't feel other things, like the bright tingle of the stars, or the music of the aurora, or best of all the silky feeling of the moonlight on our skin. It's worth the cold for that."

-Phillip Pullman, *The Golden Compass*

# WINTERIZING YOUR HOME

**PLUMBING:** Plumbing is especially susceptible to cold weather and freezing. Burst pipes from freezing can cause some of the most expensive repairs in your home. Exterior faucets, also known as hose bibs or sill cocks, need to have the water supply turned off, which is sometimes located inside the house behind the spigot, near a waterline, or near the hot water heater. The water will then need to be drained from the pipe by opening up the exterior faucet. Remember to disconnect your garden hoses and drain them prior to storing them. Always be sure you are able to locate your main water shut off valves. If pipes freeze and burst due to negligence, you will be responsible for the repairs and any costs. If this happens, submit a work order or call your tenant liaison immediately.

**GUTTERS, DOWN SPOUTS & ROOFS:** All gutters and downspouts must be cleaned a few times throughout the fall and again at the beginning of spring. Improperly maintained gutters can lead to gutter damage and possible damage to the house. Remove all leaves and branches from the roof, gutters/downspouts, window wells and floor drains. Gutters and downspouts also need to be flushed with water to assure there are no clogs. To insure a dry basement, make sure all downspouts are directed away from the house foundation and that splash blocks are properly placed under the downspouts, sloping away from the house. Outside stairwells equipped with drains must be kept free and clear of leaves to prevent water accumulation, which will seep under doors and into the basement.

**CLOGGED DRAINS:** With the holiday season comes our favorite meals. Putting too much food into the garbage disposal can cause clogging problems. Cold water should run during the use of the disposal until the food clears the drain, approximately 30 seconds after. Do not put the following items down the garbage disposal: celery, vegetable & fruit peelings, egg shells, bones, rice, seeds, etc. Not only can some of these items damage your disposal, they can quickly clog your kitchen sink requiring the services of a plumber.

We hope you find this information helpful as you prepare your home for the cold weather. Please call us anytime you have questions and have a safe holiday season.

## Winter Vegetables with Gorgonzola

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium rutabaga- cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2lbs Yukon Gold potatoes- peeled and cut into 1 1/2 inch cubes
- 1 turnip - cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 carrots- cut into 1 1/2 inch cubes
- 1 large fennel bulb- halved. Cored and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces
- 8 fresh thyme sprigs
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1/3 cup gorgonzola cheese
- Salt & Pepper to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a roasting pan, toss the rutabaga, potatoes, turnips, fennel, thyme and oil; Season with salt & pepper. Roast for 1 hour and 40 minutes, or until tender.
2. In a small skillet, boil the vinegar until it has reduced down to 2 tablespoons. Approximately 5 minutes.
3. Sprinkle the cheese over the vegetables and place back in oven until melted. Drizzle balsamic glaze over the dishes and serve.

## HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSINGS

We will be closed December 23rd, 24th, 25th & 31st. January 1st. If you need assistance during our holiday closings please call our After Hours Phone Line:

**703.537.3332**



We treat each property we manage as if it were our own home.