

Water Systems

Drain absolutely everything!

Drain all the lines by turn off water pump at circuit breaker and opening all the taps and valves. For added security blow the water out with air after draining. (Use a compressor, a can of compressed air, or a hand-operated diaphragm pump.)

Leave the faucets open.

Use a non-toxic RV antifreeze (propylene glycol) in anything that can't be drained, such as the toilet trap. Failing to use antifreeze in areas with extreme cold could result in freezing of the pipes and their subsequent cracking or even explosion, which could result in hundreds or thousands of dollars in damage.

- The hot water tank** Turn off the electric circuit to the water heater and drain the water heater tank to avoid damage by freezing. Drain hot water tank from the valve at bottom. Attach hose and direct into floor drain.
- The toilet tank** Turn off water valve for toilet and flush to empty tank. Pour RV antifreeze in tank and make sure some goes down into goose neck (do this by pressing flush lever). Pour some antifreeze into toilet bowl.
- The washing machine** Disinfect the washer by running a normal cycle with white vinegar. Turn off the water, disconnect the hoses and advance the machine to the spin cycle. This ensures that all water gets out of the appliance. Finally, disconnect the power supply and leave the lid open so the last of the moisture can evaporate.
- The dishwasher** Run an empty cycle with vinegar to disinfect, put on dry cycle, then pour antifreeze in the bottom.
- The sink and tub traps** After the the water is off and the lines have been blown clear, add antifreeze.
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Kitchen

- Remove **ALL** food when you are closing the cabin – even a box of crackers or a fruit-flavored dessert mix may be all it takes to attract mice, other rodents, or a bear!
- Wash and wipe out your cupboards inside and out so there are no crumbs or food bits remaining.
- Wipe down counters, appliances, and table so as not to attract vermin.
- Empty fridge, clean thoroughly, unplug and prop door open.
- Use a disinfectant cleaner to eliminate all odors from garbage and recycling containers

and lids.

Unplug all appliances.

Bathroom

Pack up and take home any liquids (shampoo, conditioner, liquid soap) that shouldn't freeze.

Empty your medicine cabinet of any liquids or items that will pass their expiry date over the winter.

Clean the toilet, tub, and sink. A good natural cleaner is Borax and vinegar.

Linens and clothing

- Strip beds and wash all sheets.
- Wash any used towels, dishtowels, or soiled clothes. If you can't wash them, take them home with you.
- If your linen or clothes shelves are open, cover them with plastic. I use large green garbage bags.
- You may want put mothballs in your linens to further protect them. Some recommend cedar chips as another way to deter moths and other fabric eating insects.

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Phone

More and more people are forgoing "land lines" at recreational properties because so many of us have cell phones. If you do have a land line:

- You may be able to have your phone line suspended for a specific period without losing your phone number or paying for re-installation charges. This can make a lot of sense if you will be closing the cabin for 3 - 6 months. Check with your phone company.

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Heating

- Furnace** Turn thermostat all the way down and switch furnace to OFF.
- Wood stove** Clean out the stove box. You might want to lay a fire ready for spring opening - you'll appreciate it next spring!
- Fireplace** Clean and sweep out the fireplace.
- Chimney** Check your chimney and if necessary put on a chimney cap or cover to stop animals from entering.

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Electrical

- It's a good idea to turn off the power supply at the main switch to prevent any electricity use during the winter. Remember, many appliances draw power even when they are turned off.
- Unplug TV.
- Unplug stereo.
- Unplug microwave.
- Unplug refrigerator.
- Unplug any electric blankets.
- Basically, unplug everything!

Workshop

- Tools** Any to bring home for the winter?
- Paints and Stains** These don't survive freezing well, so pack them up and take them home.
- Glue** Most wood working glues shouldn't freeze so you're best to take them home too.
- Sweep/vacuum and put things in their place.

Garden furniture

- Hoses** Empty hoses and store in garage or shed.
- Barbeque** Take your barbecue home with you when you close the cabin OR store it in a secure shed. Make sure it is clean.
- Lawn chairs** Stack and store in a shed or under the eaves or porch roof. Bring in all cushions.
- Umbrellas and gazebos** Dismantle and store inside.
- Tables** Metal or glass will weather well. To protect your wood tables (and other wooden outdoor furniture) store them in a shed or garage.
- Flower pots** Empty all your flower pots, so they are ready for planting next spring. You'll be glad you did!
- Don't leave scented products outside. Even non-food items like suntan lotion, insect repellent, soap and candles may attract bears.

Mice and other rodents

Damage from mice and squirrels is a concern for many cottage owners. To prevent damage from these undesirable rodents when you are closing the cabin.

- Inspect both the interior and exterior of your cabin to make sure there are no openings through which these pests may enter.
- Remove all sources of food from the cabin.
- Consider using mouse poison.

Security

Security is an issue when you are closing the cabin. Police say that more thefts occur from recreational properties during the winter when they are standing empty than at any other time of the year. Some things you can do to protect your property:

- Make sure all doors and windows are secure and locked.
- Close blinds/curtains on all windows (upstairs and down).
- Make sure garage/workshop is locked.
- Some people install wood covers on windows and doors for added security.
- Take an inventory and photographs of your dwelling and its contents. Write down serial numbers where applicable. These steps will be of great benefit to you in the unfortunate event you have to make an insurance claim.
- Take anything that's **really** valuable to you (monetarily or emotionally) home for the winter.
- Check with your insurance company regarding restrictions or conditions with respect to your coverage.
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