

5 Essential Steps for Winterizing Your Vacant Property



Cold weather and a drop in temperature can cause costly claims to occur on your premises. Follow these steps to make sure your vacant property is ready to withstand all the hazards that the winter season brings.

1. **Protect Pipes:** One cold snap can cause pipes to freeze and burst, resulting in extensive and costly water damage.
 - Turn off the water system, sprinkler system and outside faucets and drain all pipes
 - Or, keep the building at a moderately warm temperature
 - Wrap all exposed pipes with foam rubber or fiberglass to keep them from freezing
 - Allow sink faucets to slowly drip to provide an extra safeguard.



2. **Repair the Roof:** Small openings in a roof can cause minor leaks during summer months that will become a bigger problem during the winter. Roofs can even collapse due to the added weight of snow and ice.
 - Schedule a licensed and insured contractor to inspect the roof
 - Repair any holes, patchy areas or damaged roof shingles
3. **Clean Out Gutters:** Wet leaves will freeze as temperatures drop, causing “ice damming.” This causes snow and ice to seep into the roof and creates extensive water damage.
 - Consider hiring a licensed and insured professional to carefully inspect all gutters and downspouts
 - Remove any debris and blockages
 - Flush water through to ensure all gutters and downspouts are cleared
4. **Prune Trees:** Untamed trees and shrubs can damage your own property or someone else’s property during snow and wind storms.
 - Look around your property for any loose branches or tree limbs that appear to be hanging over your roof, garage, shed, power lines, etc.
 - Have a licensed and insured contractor prune trees/branches appropriately



5. **Clear Snow and Ice:** Just because you’re not occupying your property during the winter doesn’t mean people won’t slip and fall on snow and ice on your property.
 - Apply rock salt both prior to and after each storm
 - Promptly remove any snow and ice that has accumulated on your walkways

