



ON THE MOVE



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A Monthly Newsletter from Melissa Friesen with US Preferred Realty
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If you have any family or friends looking to buy or sell a home, please give them my name.
If your home is currently listed for sale with another Realtor®, please disregard this offer.

GET WINTER-WISE: Prepare Your Home for Cold Weather

December 22 is the first day of winter 2010/2011. In many parts of the country, cooler weather has already begun to set in. So before you curl up with a good book or head outdoors to enjoy the snow, take time to make sure your home is ready for cold weather so it can enjoy the winter as well.

Inspect your heating system.

Breathe easier this winter. Have an HVAC professional inspect your furnace and clean air ducts to remove dust. Then, make sure you have a good supply of furnace filters on hand and make a note to change them every month. Something as simple as changing a furnace filter can reduce heating costs by up to 5%. If you have hot-water radiators, bleed the valves.

Replace old thermostats.

Nearly 50% of the energy used in a typical American home is for heating and cooling. Think about replacing your thermostat with a programmable one, allowing you to keep your home a little cooler at night.

Ready your chimney and fireplace.

If you have a wood-burning fireplace that hasn't been cleaned recently, hire a chimney sweep to remove soot and creosote. Chimneys should be capped or screened to keep birds or rodents from nesting there. Check your fireplace damper and make sure it still opens and closes properly. For brick chimneys, inspect the mortar and tuckpoint if needed.

Go outside. Weatherize the exterior, doors and windows.

Inspect the outside of your home. Look for crevice cracks and exposed entry points around pipes and seal them. Weatherstrip around doors and gaps along the foundation helps to keep cold air out. Caulk around windows for the same reason. Switch out screens and storm windows in the fall, before it gets cold.

Do you need more attic insulation?

Although insulating or upgrading insulation can be a big step, it is relatively easy to add insulation to most attics. A poorly insulated attic can be a major source of heat loss.

Up on the roof.

Inspect your roof, gutters and downspouts. Replace roof shingles that are worn and check the flashing to make sure your roof is watertight. Clean leaves and debris from gutters and if you don't have them already, think about installing leaf guards. Clear downspouts with a hose.

No more frozen pipes.

You can prevent your plumbing from freezing with a few easy steps:

- Drain and detach all garden hoses.
- Insulate exposed plumbing pipes.
- Drain air conditioner pipes. If your air conditioning system has a water shut-off valve, turn it off.
- Leave heat on while on vacation (at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit).



When the Lights go out

Prepare for power outages ahead of time:

- Buy indoor candles and matches or a lighter.
- Keep a flashlight and extra batteries on each floor of your home.
- Keep the phone numbers of utility companies near your phone or inside your phone book.
- Buy a battery-operated radio.
- Have extra bottled water and non-perishable foods on hand. Don't forget food for your pets.
- Protect computer and sensitive electronic equipment with a battery backup and/or surge protector(s).
- Keep blankets and a first-aid kit in a location that's easy to access and remember.
- Prepare an evacuation plan for emergencies.

WARRANTY WISDOM

When searching for a home service agreement, check to see if plumbing stoppages are included. Sometimes they are not covered at all and other times you may have to pay extra. With a 2-10 Home Buyers Resale Warranty Corporation home service agreement, plumbing stoppages are covered under the standard coverage.

www.2-10.com