



PJs PLUMBING

Fall Winterization Checklist

The cold winter months can wreak havoc on your home's plumbing system if you are not prepared for the temperature drop. Frozen water in pipes can be inconvenient at best and destructive at its worst. A good preventive measure to get ready for winter is to use this winterizing plumbing checklist.

1. Locate Your Water Main

You need to know where your water main is before any plumbing emergency. In the event a pipe bursts due to freezing, you'll want to be able to shut off the water quickly to minimize damage.

2. Fix Leaks

Check all exposed pipes indoors and out for leaks. If you wait for the water to freeze, the damage to surrounding pipes is likely to be more significant. If your pipes are insulated, feel for moisture that might have been soaked up by the insulation for a hidden leak.

3. Insulate Pipes

For basic preventive measures, make sure any exposed pipes are well insulated. To locate exposed pipes, look in your attic, crawl space, and garage. If you can see the pipe, it needs to be wrapped with insulation foam. Pipe wrap insulation is inexpensive and easy to install and can help reduce heating costs, as well as keep pipes protected.

4. **Outside Water Faucets** (aka: Hose Bibs, Yard Faucets, Sillcocks)

Protecting the hose bibs and pipes from the cold is very important. Start by removing any garden hoses that may be connected to outdoor faucets. By removing garden hoses, you ensure that water doesn't stay trapped in the hose bib where it can freeze and damage pipes. Drain any water the hoses may have in them before storing. Protect garden hoses by storing them in the garage or shed during winter.

To protect hose bibs from the cold, drain any collected water and insulate the faucets. In regions, like Wisconsin, where temperatures drop significantly every winter, many homes have dedicated shut-off valves for outdoor hose bibs or faucets. If you have a shut-off valve, turn the water to the hose bibs off and drain any water that is already in the pipes. This can be done by opening the hose bibs and letting the water drain completely.

If you don't have a shut-off valve, you can protect hose bibs and outdoor faucets by insulating them with hose bib covers. Hose bib covers are inexpensive and easy to install. The insulation that these foam covers provide will keep the hose bibs from freezing.

5. **Sprinkler System**

The pipes in your irrigation system are a likely place for water to collect and then freeze in cold weather. To winterize your sprinkler system, turn off the water and flush out any collected water by turning on each valve.

6. **Main Vent Pipes**

Clear any leaves from the main vent pipe on your roof. During winter, a clogged vent pipe can cause toilets to flush inadequately and waste pipes to drain poorly.

7. **Keep sump pump discharge hoses directed away from the house.**

Sump pumps are your last line of defense to protect your home against flooding. The hose removes any water to a safer location away from your home's foundation. Make sure the hose is properly pitched at downward angle away from your house so it can't trap water and freeze.