

Winterizing your home

When Should You 'Partially' Winterize: Anyone that does not live in their residence "full time", and those full time residents that leave for extended periods of time for vacations, etc. should 'partially' winterize as a precaution by turning off their water, even in the Summer months. It only takes a few minutes and if a leak/break occurs, the only amount of water that can potentially leak out will be what is actually in the lines at the time.

When Should You Completely Winterize: I advise my second home clients to start a 'full' Winterization on Labor Day Weekend, and don't stop until after Memorial Weekend. While we don't expect temperatures to drop low enough to freeze pipes this early into Fall, most of you will find that your 'visits' to the cabin will be few, if not at all before Thanksgiving. Many owners will leave after Labor Day with the 'intention' of returning before Winter sets in, only to find that 'all of a sudden' they are hearing that snow is falling at the cabin and they realize they failed to Winterize.

How To Winterize: While the 'set up' in each cabin can differ, the following is a simplified version of the procedure;

1) First determine if your Water Heater is propane or electric. If propane, go to the Water Heater and turn the settings dial to 'vacation'. Older Water Heaters may not have a 'vacation' setting, if so turn the dial to 'pilot'. If your Water Heater is electric, go to the main electrical service panel (typically on the exterior of the cabin) and find the 'breakers' marked Water Heater. Turn them off.

2) Go into the 'sub area' (underneath the cabin) and find the water supply line where it enters the foundation. This will 'typically' be a copper line coming out of the ground. The 'shut off' valve may be either a round handle not unlike the handle to your hose bib, or it can also be a 'directional' handle. If it is a directional handle, turn it until the handle is at a 90 degree angle to the incoming water line.

3) Once the water is turned off, find the lowest water faucet (preferably on the exterior) and open the faucet, and leave it open. If there is no exterior faucet, open whatever faucet is at the 'lowest' elevation point in the cabin.

4) Now, go back through the cabin and open every water faucet, shower/tub faucet, and flush every toilet. As an additional safety measure, make sure to partially open the shower head 'diverter' valve, if so equipped. Your goal is to eliminate as much water from the system as possible.

5) Next, pour a 'cap full' of antifreeze into each and every drain in the cabin including shower drains, sink drains, and toilets. Please don't use RV Antifreeze which is already diluted and will not protect your pipes!

6) Lastly, close the door to your Dishwasher (if applicable) and turn on the Dishwasher for just a few seconds. This will activate the solenoid in the Dishwasher allowing what

little water is in the line serving the Dishwasher to drain and prevent the plastic solenoid from freezing and breaking.

Conclusion: Even though you (or a service provider) properly shut down and drained your cabin, it is virtually impossible to evacuate all of the water from the system. There will always be an amount of water still in the pipes. The amount of water depends on if the plumbing system was properly 'sloped' when it was installed. When we experience freezing conditions, the remaining water in the system can still freeze and result in broken pipes. If you or someone else has not been to your cabin recently, I have very strong words of caution. Do not turn on the water and leave the cabin without looking and listening for breaks! (content provided by Arnold, CA Blog)