

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Protect Home Plumbing Now To Prevent Problems Later

(NAPSA)—Homeowners should be aware of troubles that come with frigid temperatures, especially when it comes to pipes.

“While serious plumbing problems are best left to professionals,” says Larry Rothman, Master Plumber for Roto-Rooter, North America’s largest provider of plumbing and drain cleaning services, “there are several precautions homeowners can take to prevent costly repairs.”

- Disconnect outside water hoses. Water left in the hoses can freeze and expand, causing faucets and connecting pipes inside your home to freeze and break.

- Make sure outside faucets aren’t dripping or leaking.

- When pipes freeze, water pressure builds causing cracks—no matter if the pipe is made of plastic, copper or steel. Even a tiny crack can unleash more than 250 gallons of water in a single day.

- If your home has interior shut-off valves leading to outside faucets, close them and drain water from lines.

- Cover outside faucets using a faucet insulation kit available at home centers.

- Insulate pipes in unheated areas, such as garages or crawl spaces with heat tape or thermostat-controlled heat cables.

- Seal door and window leaks to reduce cold air drafts.

- Your water heater works harder during cold weather. Flush it out and remove sediment buildup, which causes corrosion, shortens life span and reduces heating efficiency. Drain several gallons from the faucet near the bottom of the tank through a hose directed into a nearby drain.

- Carefully test the water heater’s pressure relief valve (water is very hot) by lifting up on



the lever and letting it snap back. The valve should allow a burst of hot water into the drainpipe. If not, call a professional to have a new valve installed.

- Set the water heater’s thermostat at 120°F for optimum performance.

- Clear leaves and debris from downspouts to ensure easy drainage when water freezes and thaws.

- Inspect and clean sump pump and pit. Pumps exposed to extreme cold can freeze preventing the pump from operating.

- When leaving home for extended periods, shut off the main water valve and drain the system by opening faucets at the highest and lowest points of the house. Keep the heat on and set no lower than 55 degrees.

Follow these tips if you stay in the home during the colder months. Many additional steps should be taken for vacation properties that will be abandoned or left unattended for weeks or months at a time. Seek professional help for such properties. More seasonal tips are available at [www.rotorooter.com](http://www.rotorooter.com).