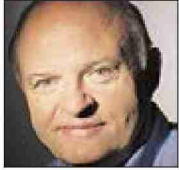


The Handyman

Follow a checklist for seasonal home shutdown

With the Labor Day weekend unofficially signaling the end of summer, many folks are starting to think about shutting down their cottage for the winter or preparing to winterize their home before they head south. And last year's brutal winter reminded us



**GLENN
HAEGE**

that properly winterizing your home or cottage can make sure it survives another potential polar vortex.

One of the first things is to clean out your refrigerator and freezer, unplug them and leave the doors ajar so it doesn't get moldy. Then unplug all your other appliances and electronics to avoid adding to your electric bill and eliminate the potential for a damaged TV or computer monitor due to a power surge.

Now turn off the main water source and empty the commodes and water tanks to eliminate the potential of water damage if one of these water lines bursts or develops a leak. Drain and turn off the hot water heater, as well.

Turn the thermostat down to 60 degrees. If you have a fireplace, close the flue so the birds and raccoons won't enter your home or cottage. Of course, if you have a gas fireplace, make sure you shut off the gas line that runs to the fireplace. The same is true if you have a gas line running to your outdoor grill.

Now walk around the outside of your home or cottage to check for things that need maintenance before winter hits. That

includes making sure your gutters are free of debris and aligned properly and your downspout extenders aren't clogged to allow melting snow and ice to drain properly.

If you want to use smart home technology to give you added peace of mind when you are away this winter, there are plenty of ways you can check on potential water leaks or even make sure no one is breaking into your home or cottage while you are gone. To monitor for water leaks, you can use products such as Water Safe, thewatersafe.com; Floodstopper, thefloodstopper.com; WaterAlarm Dialer, controlproductsonline.com; and Water Cop, watercop.com. These systems can contact you via a text, email or phone call if a leak is detected.

For home security, you can install a wireless system yourself that can be monitored via smartphone, tablet or computer, such as the iSmart Alarm, ismartalarm.com, and Skylink, skylink-

home.com.

Contact your local police and tell them about your plans to be away. Stop mail delivery and newspaper service. Also consider contracting a snow removal service.

Make sure you have either a family member, friend or neighbor with a key to your home or cottage in the event a problem does arise. I suggest you pay a trusted person to physically go inside your home and visually check on things every week.

With this information, you can be sure to know what's going on in your home while you're away.

If you would like to suggest a question for this column, e-mail askglenn@masterhandyman.com. If you want to talk to Glenn Haege, call his "Handyman Show" on WJR-AM (760) at (866) ASK GLENN, (866) 275-4536, between noon and 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. The "Handyman Show" can be heard on more than 130 radio stations.



iSmart Alarm Inc.

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