



Prepare For Winter

Winter is right here and preventative maintenance can save you hundreds and even thousands of dollars, due to cold weather freeze-ups. Right now is a good time of the year to do an outdoor winter preparation checklist. The following checklist is only a guide and is no guarantee to prevent all winter freeze-ups:

Check your heat tape under your home and make sure it is plugged in and operating properly. Make sure light is lit and lightly touch the pipe that is wrapped by the heat tape and make sure you feel that it is warm. If not, the heat tape will need to be replaced.

Make sure heat tape is properly wrapped around the pipe and extends at least 18" into the crock and a batten of insulation should be laid over the top of the crock to keep the ground heat in the crock.

Sewer lines should be visually checked to make sure they are not sagging. If they are sagging, water will pool in these areas and freeze. This will cause sewer plug and back up into your home.

Skirting should be inspected all around your home. Be sure there are no gaps or holes in the skirting. Secure all skirting so it is tight and will not blow out. Frigid winds will blow through and cause freeze-ups of water and sewer lines. Make sure there are no spots under your skirting where animals can get under your home. Animals and cats can cause extensive damage to the underbelly of your home.

Detach any garden hoses from your outside water spouts. If left attached to your home, this can freeze at this point and continue into your home.

Take some time and do a complete inspection of your home before winter – this will save you from unexpected emergencies with your home through the winter months.

If you have freeze-ups and the water line bursts under your home, please note that Community Maintenance will shut the water off under your home until you repair the leak to try to prevent hazardous ice build up on roads.

Rules and Regulations Reminder

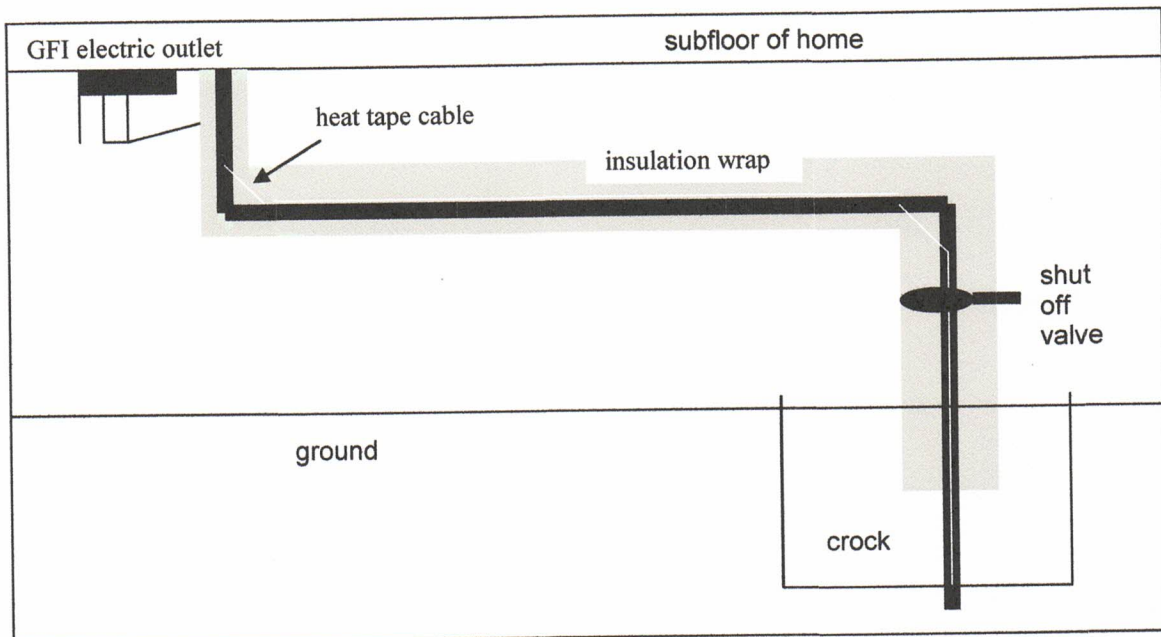
D. WINTERIZING HOME Any winterizing of homes (such as plastic being used for storm windows, insulating the skirting, etc.) must be on the interior of the home. There will be no temporary exterior attachments of any nature. A UL approved heat tape must be installed at the time the home is installed on site and be replaced when necessary to prevent the freezing of water service lines, meters, valves and riser pipes. Heat tapes must extend at least 18" into the crock. In communities where the crock is located outside the skirting, resident is responsible for installing and maintaining proper housing of the crock in accordance with community specifications.

Heat Tape Facts

Winter has arrived! Below you will find a quick guide on how to ensure your home is prepared for cold and snow.

First do a visual inspection of the water lines under your home. The two access panels in your skirting show you where to look. One panel opens to the water crock, where the water lines come from the ground. The other access panel is under your hot water heater tank, where the water lines enter your home. Your heat tape runs from the water crock to the point the water lines enter the belly of the home. It should be completely insulated. The heat tape plugs into an electric outlet in the bottom of the home, right next to the water line's entry into the home. It only heats up to about 40 degrees and should not be hot.

If you have a water softener, it is important to check the lines that the water softener company installed. Many times, these pipes are not insulated and lack heat tape. All exposed water lines need to be insulated and have heat tape or they will freeze in the winter. Most of the freeze-ups that occur during the winter are due to water softener lines without heat tape and insulation. Most water softener companies add their water lines directly into this line. If your heat tape is more than 5 years old, you may want to replace it. The illustration shows a typical setup and how it should look.



Next, check to see that the heat tape is working. To check your heat tape, plug it in and feel it. This has to be done when it is cool outside. The heat tape should be warm, but not hot. Many heat tapes have a light on the plug to show you if it has power. If it is not working, plug a lamp or radio into the electrical outlet to see that it has power. If the outlet has power, but the heat tape does not get warm, replace it. (Remember that the heat tape only gets 40 degrees.)

If you cannot check it yourself, have a service company check it for you. This is one item where preventative maintenance will save you a lot of money.