

FREEZING WEATHER WARNING: HIGH NOTICE

DATE: January 6, 2010
TO: Fraternal Property Management Association Contacts
FROM: Bobbi Larsen, Education Consultant
SUBJECT: Preparing a chapter house for extremely cold temperatures

With temperatures expected to be at or below freezing for much of the country this week, it is imperative you take the time to properly prepare your chapter house for the cold weather. It is especially important for those facilities just re-opening for the new term.

During periods of extreme colder temperatures

- Service your furnace or boiler system—boiler pipes pose a particular risk in this weather.
- Open the indoor faucets slightly to allow water to trickle as moving water does not freeze as easily.
- Leave the doors to cabinets that contain water lines open, this will allow heat to enter the area and help prevent freeze.
- Make sure that attic areas are well insulated to prevent the formation of ice dams.
- Respond to any leaks promptly to mitigate damage and prevent further harm.
- Make sure that appropriate chapter members know where the main water shut off is as well as any other water shut offs (e.g. around commodes), and that they are in good working condition.

Essential measures to minimize the risk of a freeze or water damage loss

- Keep furnace on and thermostat set at or above 68 degrees.
- Inspect windows and repair all broken glass.
- Place additional insulation on exterior walls and windows.
- Insulate exterior doors appropriately, and assure all close and latch completely.
- Attach and secure downspouts with extension from foundation to prevent melting snow from draining onto the driveway, sidewalks, or patios.

Additional safety measures during colder months

- Clear all necessary snow and ice from sidewalks, fire escapes, and walkways which may result in a slip and fall hazard
- Prohibit space heaters or ensure that your policies regarding space heaters are being followed. The National Fire Prevention Association reported that nearly 70% of home heating fires and deaths in 2002 were attributed to space heaters.
- Enforce a no-smoking policy or ensure that your designated smoking area is equipped with a fire-safe disposal system.

What are the benefits of being prepared for extremely cold weather?

- Avoid the expense and the time associated with a claim and restoring the damaged area
- With a large loss, you may risk having an uninhabitable house
- Water damage, when left unaddressed can lead to mold growth