

Winter Weather Tips

This week, our area is expected to have extremely cold temperatures not seen for several years. We here at Habitat for Humanity of St. Joseph County want to make sure our community is prepared to deal with the severe cold. Here are some tips to keep your home safe this winter.

HEATING & ELECTRIC

- Test smoke & carbon monoxide detectors
- Never plug more than one heating appliance into an outlet
- Do not use an extension cord for space heaters
- Never leave children unattended near a heating device
- Do not use generators indoors to avoid carbon monoxide
- Do not use an appliance with frayed electrical cords
- **Keep your thermostat set to at least 70-72 degrees**
- Change your furnace filter if needed

PLUMBING

- Remove outside hoses, sprinklers, etc.
- **Keep indoor faucets dripping**
- Open doors of cabinets and vanities where pipes run through to allow for warm air flow
- Locate your water shut-off valves. In the event of a burst pipe, turn off water immediately
- Unclog downspouts

PREPARATION

- Purchase a fire extinguisher and store it somewhere with easy access
- Have extra flashlights and batteries on hand.
- Have extra food and water on hand
- Stock your first aid kit
- **Clear snow away from outside exhaust vents**
- If driving, pack extra blankets, coats, gloves, etc.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Doors and windows may stick or freeze
- Run ceiling fans in reverse to ensure air circulation
- Limit your time outdoors at all costs. Do not open windows or doors unless necessary
- Have contact information for a plumber and a furnace technician handy in case of an emergency
- If you encounter furnace issues, have arrangements with family, friends, or neighbors in case you need somewhere warm to stay
- Use space heaters if needed, but follow safety tips
- If you use a generator, be sure to keep it outside in a well-ventilated area to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning