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### Winterize Your Home

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Invisible Killer

### Board Meetings

At the District Office:  
Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30  
am  
Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, at  
8:30 am  
Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30  
am  
Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30  
am  
Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30  
am

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### **WINTERIZE YOUR HOME**

Alpine Meadows has already experienced freezing weather this year and as it seems every year, some customers find themselves without water due to frozen water pipes. Here are a few steps that you can take to avoid problems this winter:

(1) **Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses.** Disconnecting the hose allows water to drain from the supply line, which prevents an overnight freeze from bursting the faucet or the supply line.

(2) **Cover air vents.** Close or cover all air vents in the foundation wall of your home to protect pipes in the crawl space from exposure to freezing air.

(3) **Open cabinet doors.** Opening cabinet doors allows heat to get to uninsulated pipes near exterior walls.

(4) **Insulate pipes in unheated areas.** A little known fact is that hot water pipes generally freeze before cold water pipes. The water pipes that tend to be most susceptible to freezing are found in outer walls, crawl spaces, attics and garages. Exposed pipes should be insulated with items such as pipe wrap, heat tape or foam jackets. These insulating products are available at your local building supply or hardware store. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing these products. Call a plumber if you have any questions.

(5) **Winterize your vacant house.** If you leave your house for several days or months, help protect pipes from freezing by following these steps:

a. Turn off your water using the main shut-off valve installed on the house side of the water meter. The District encourages ALL property owners to have a main shut-off valve installed. **You may not turn off the water using the District's valve located in your meter box. Damage caused by doing so is the owner's responsibility.** Be aware that if you have a fire protection sprinkler system in your house, it will be deactivated when you shut off the water, if your shut off valve is located ahead of the fire service take off.

b. If you drain your water heater, be sure to turn off the electricity or gas source.

c. Open indoor and outdoor faucets to drain pipes.

d. Drain toilets by holding down the lever until the tank empties. Then turn off the water at the water supply located under the holding tank.

e. Leave your heat on at a minimum temperature of 55 degrees to help keep pipes from freezing in interior walls.

**If your pipes do freeze, don't take chances.** If your pipes do freeze and you turn on your faucets and nothing comes out, leave the faucet on and call a plumber. If you do determine that your pipes have frozen and burst, turn off the water at the main shut-off valve, not the District's valve, and leave the faucet on. Even the most cautious homeowner may eventually experience a frozen pipe. If this happens, don't panic. A freeze-up at an exposed pipe or under a sink can generally be melted by applying heat with a hair dryer, heat lamp or even a light bulb. Light bulbs should always be protected by a cage and not be placed near flammable materials. Start warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible.

**CAUTION: NEVER TRY TO THAW A PIPE WITH A TORCH OR OTHER OPEN FLAME.**

This may seem like a reasonable approach, but it is very dangerous. Thawing a line too rapidly with extreme heat can result in an explosion and may cause injury. Water damage is preferable to burning down your house.

**Get to know your plumbing.** Learn how to shut the water off and know where your pipes are located. If your pipes do freeze, time is of the essence. The quicker you can shut off the water, or direct your plumber to the problem, the better chance you have to prevent pipes from bursting.

### **CARBON MONOXIDE: THE INVISIBLE KILLER**

Carbon monoxide (CO) has no odor. You can't smell it and you can't see it. Dangerous levels of carbon monoxide can build up from any fuel-burning appliance or equipment if it isn't working properly or if the CO that is produced isn't conducted safely to the outside. For

example, if there isn't enough oxygen available to run your furnace, the rate of CO production can greatly increase. If you don't have a venting system to capture the CO, then heavy or light CO production can lead to a deadly build-up in your home.

The North Tahoe Fire Department strongly recommends that every home be protected by at least one CO detector, which can alert you to dangerous levels of CO in your home in time to prevent poisoning. Early warning of hazardous CO levels is very important, but prevention comes first. Know what you need to do to ensure your home is safe from CO. Cooking and heating equipment and motor vehicles in attached garages make up a large percentage of the home CO problem, but portable electric generators, camp stoves and lanterns can also be culprits when not used properly.

The symptoms of CO poisoning – severe headache, dizziness, nausea – can seem like other illnesses, such as the flu or food poisoning. Learn the signs; CO poisoning requires immediate medical attention.

You can prevent CO poisoning in your home with these key actions:

- Install at least one CO detector near the sleeping area; test it every month and learn the sound of the alarm.
- Have heating equipment inspected each year to identify damage or malfunction; make repairs as needed.
- Open the flue before using the fireplace.
- If you use a kerosene or gas heater, open a window slightly when the heater is in use.
- Use equipment properly; never use an oven to heat a room and never bring BBQ grills indoors or into a garage or covered porch.
- Generators must be used outdoors in well-ventilated areas, never inside the home or garage.
- Always move vehicles out of the garage after starting the ignition and then close the door.
- Don't allow snow or anything else to block the vents for your dryer, stove or heating equipment.

If your CO alarm signals, take it seriously. Quickly check to see if the battery power is low. If the alarm is steady, assume there is a CO leak and evacuate your home. Call 911 and report a suspected CO leak. NTFPD personnel will respond and let you know if it is safe to go back inside or if you need to arrange for a service technician.

Carbon monoxide: you can't see it or smell it, but with the right actions you can stay safe from it. For non-emergency questions regarding carbon monoxide, contact the North Tahoe Fire District, Division of Fire & Life Safety at (530)583-6913.

**REMINDER - LATCH THE DUMPSTERS AFTER DISPOSING OF YOUR GARBAGE**

**Happy Holidays!**

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