



Southwestern Insurance Information Service

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NEWS RELEASE

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Be prepared for winter weather, warns an association of insurance companies

(Austin, TX) Winter is just around the corner in Texas and cold weather calamities can play havoc on a home unless people protect their homes from damage caused by freezing weather, according to Sandra Helin, spokesperson for Southwestern Insurance Information Service, a non-profit insurance trade association.

“The recent round of cold weather is probably just the beginning of more freezing weather in the months ahead,” she said.

“About a quarter-million families each year have their homes ruined because of water pipes that freeze and pump thousands of gallons of water into their homes destroying carpets and furniture,” she cautioned.

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Insulate pipes in the crawl space and attic and check them for cracks, she said. These exposed pipes are the most vulnerable to freezing.

An eighth-inch crack in a pipe can result in up to 250 gallons of water a day being pumped into your home,” she said.

“Always let indoor and outdoor faucets drip during cold weather and disconnect garden hoses to reduce the chance that pipes outside will freeze,” Helin advised.

“If you are going to be away from your home, set the thermostat in your home no lower than 65 degrees and ask a neighbor to check on your home daily,” she said. “Open cabinet doors to allow heat to get to uninsulated pipes under the sinks and appliances near exterior walls.”

Make sure your gutters remain free of debris with regular sweepings or install gutter screens to prevent debris build up, Helin added.

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“Gutters that become clogged will collect snow, ice and water. If the water can’t drain properly from the gutters it can seep into homes and cause significant damage,” she pointed out.

“Fireplace chimney fires are quite common because of poor maintenance. Consider having your chimney cleaned and swept by a reputable firm,” she said.

“A chimney fire can cause extensive and expensive damage to a home and they occur quite frequently,” Helin said.

A complete list of winter weather tips may be found on the Southwestern Insurance Information Service Web page at www.siisinfo.org, she concluded

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