

## **BEND FIRE & RESCUE ENCOURAGES PREPAREDNESS FOR FREEZING WEATHER**

News Release from **Bend Fire & Rescue**

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Below-freezing weather is predicted over the next several days and Bend Fire & Rescue would like to remind community members that a few simple actions can help prevent disasters during and after the freezing temperatures.

Whether you are a property owner or renter, business manager or contractor - winterizing your home or place of business should be done in the fall, prior to the first freeze to best protect your property.

If you are just getting around to winterizing, here are some things you will want to do before the snow freezes this weekend:

**Protect your pipes:** These simple steps can prevent the costly damage from water line breaks and lessen the time to restore your property back to full operation following a break.

- Make sure outdoor faucets and water spigots have insulated covers.
- Cover foundation vents with insulated covers.
- Make sure heating and ventilation systems are in good working order.
- Maintain adequate heating (above 40 degrees Fahrenheit) indoors where pipes are present. This may mean heating normally vacant spaces and opening your cupboards below sinks during freezing weather to allow warm air to circulate and prevent freezing.

**Create emergency access:** By ensuring access to utilities and pathways, you will have a quicker exit in an emergency and help emergency services respond more efficiently.

- Locate and create access to your water meter box at the street, your natural gas or propane shut offs and other utilities around your home.
- Clear snow to create three feet of space around nearby fire hydrants.
- Clear snow from your sidewalks, driveways, pathways, access to pets and farm animals and vehicles.

**Heat with caution:** Home heating is the second leading cause of home fires in Oregon and was one of the top causes of structure fires last year in Bend.

- Check that your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are in working order. As the weather gets colder, we tend to shut the house up much more tightly. This can lead to a quicker buildup of smoke and carbon monoxide indoors.
- When using space heaters or other supplemental heating equipment, ensure you follow the instructions for intended use. Many gas-powered heaters are not designed for indoor use and the carbon monoxide they can release could kill you.
- Maintain at least three feet of space around heat sources.

- Ensure all electrical heating appliances are safely plugged into an outlet or approved surge protector.

### ***Commercial Sprinkler Systems***

Bend Fire & Rescue would like to remind building owners, facility managers, and building maintenance personnel to act before the cold weather hits to prevent fire sprinkler systems from freezing. Our department responds to several fire sprinkler activations due to pipes breaking from freezing every year. These breaks can cause significant water damage and can easily be prevented. Even if they don't break, frozen fire sprinkler pipes render the sprinkler system inoperative, thus jeopardizing lives and property. Check your fire sprinkler system today:

- Ensure that all periodic maintenance has been completed.
- Contact your fire sprinkler service company to schedule service if it is overdue. Frequencies for maintenance vary depending on the type of system that is installed.
- Empty any drains for the sprinkler system to prevent water from building up and freezing on the exterior or exposed areas of these systems.

For more information about preparing for winter, please contact Bend Fire & Rescue Prevention Division at 541-322-6300. Stay safe and warm!

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