

SNOW AND COLD WEATHER BULLETIN

November, 2010

WINTER HEATING

Minimum heat requirement adopted by the Ridgefield Community Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees requires that all units maintain a minimum temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit at all times to avoid frozen pipes, etc. This regulation must be strictly adhered to.

Your heating system has been designed to provide 70 degrees inside your home when the temperature is zero outside. This is fine for most weather conditions, but when we have 25 to 40 MPH gales, the wind chill factor drops the temperature another 15 to 25 degrees, and your heating system has to work much harder to maintain comfort. During these periods of extremely cold weather, your heating system will be most efficient if the thermostat is set to your comfort level, between 68 and 70 degrees, and not varied for day and night temperature. The system can heat air and people very quickly, but if your walls and furniture are also substantially below temperature, the system will take much longer to adjust to a thermostat change.

In order to balance the air temperature between rooms and levels in townhouses, we recommend that you keep the furnace/air-conditioning fan running continuously and let the thermostat control the furnace. This will circulate the air throughout the house and should keep your home temperature balanced. The alternative to this is to seasonally adjust the room's air vents to accommodate changing seasons. If you close off bedrooms, leave the garage door open, turn the heat down and don't take the proper precautions, you stand a good chance of having comfort problems, high heating bills, and potential frozen pipes.

Extreme cold weather can freeze hot and cold water pipes very quickly when the thermostat is set too low and/or when a cold air draft hits a pipe directly. Cold air drafts, through insulation gaps smaller than the diameter of a pencil, will freeze a pipe if it is in line with the draft. Even if all precautions are taken some gaps still escape notice and pipes can freeze. Frozen pipes can be thawed and not cause any problems if they are taken care of as soon as noticed. If frozen pipes are allowed to thaw by themselves, they may burst and flood your home.

There are several precautions you can take to minimize the likelihood of frozen pipes, such as keeping bedroom, bathroom and closet doors ajar to prevent cold spots. Do not continually adjust your thermostat, and in extremely cold conditions you can leave the hot and cold water faucets trickling at the furthest point away from the incoming water service. Check your faucets in the morning and at night and if you do find a freeze up, contact the Management Office immediately.

If you are going away for several days or longer in the winter, please notify the Management Office, and we will be glad to periodically check your home for heat loss or any other problems. If you are going away and an extreme cold spell is anticipated, it is a good idea to shut off your main water valve and leave the faucets open. No damage will result from this, and it may save your home from being flooded should you lose your heat.

OUTSIDE FAUCETS

A few minutes of preventative maintenance will minimize the potential of your outside faucet pipe freezing, breaking, and causing inside water damage. Due to the variety of Ridgefield unit designs, we have several different types of faucets and winterizing procedures as follows:

1. If your outside faucet has an inside shut-off valve, (This is on all units that have a brass handle on the outside faucet), the inside valve should be closed to cut off the water supply, and the outside faucet should be left open, and hose disconnected to alleviate inside water damage.
2. Deerfield Units - Shut off the valve in the basement, which is located on the rear wall near the patio door. Open the outside faucet and leave it open for the winter. Loosen the small round drain cover on the side of the inside valve sufficiently to let the water drain from the small drain hole, and leave this cover loose for the winter.
3. If your unit has an outside "Frost Free" type faucet, you do not have to do anything, but you must disconnect the outside hose or it will freeze up and cause inside water damage.
4. Please call the Management Office if you need assistance, or if you are unsure about what or how to winterize your outside faucet.

PATIO SNOW BUILD-UP

Snow piling up against the patio door presents the possibility for a water leak problem. These doors are not waterproof and when the snow melts, the water can flood the slider track causing a water leak into your home. It only takes a few minutes to remove the snow built up against your door, and it may save you a problem later.

Snow piling up against your patio electrical outlet can also cause problems, due to the ground fault circuit protection that is required on these outlets by the Electrical Safety Code. These circuit protectors are also connected to your bathroom outlets and are extremely sensitive to grounded circuits. When the snow builds up around the exterior outlet, some moisture may seep into the outlet box and trip the breaker, causing a loss of power. It is suggested that you remove any snow built up around these outlets.

SNOW PLOWING POLICY

Please read, cooperate, and comply with this policy: Snow removal and road sanding are not easily performed, and they are very expensive tasks. Your cooperation is necessary to perform these tasks safely, efficiently, and with the least amount of inconvenience to all residents.

1. Roadway plowing will commence after 3" of accumulation.
2. Driveway snow removal will start immediately following the storm only when there is 4" or more accumulation.
3. Please keep all roadways and driveways free of vehicles. Please use the guest parking spaces and/or your garage when a snowstorm is expected, as this will leave your driveway open for snow removal.
4. Ridgefield is divided into snow removal areas. A rotating starting point will be used for equal treatment of all residences within each neighborhood.
5. Please shovel your walkways. We do not do any hand labor, except in "special needs" cases, which will require obtaining a Snow Removal Contract from the Management Office. There is a fee for this service.

6. Priority emergency driveway plowing is available for residents with special needs. Please explain your particular situation in writing (or by phone in emergency situations), and we will try to accommodate your request. Please do not abuse this “special needs priority”. Only legitimate, reasonable requests will be considered in fairness to the entire community.

DECISION MAKING POLICY

Sanding and snow removal or just snow plowing depends on:

1. Time storm starts
2. Weather prediction on accumulation
3. Weather prediction for next several days
4. Weekday, weekend, or Holiday
5. Ridgefield community travel patterns

Best judgment, common sense, and economic justification are considered for each call for a snow action decision. Mistakes can be made, but the safe movement of people and vehicles will always be the first priority in any decision.

FURNACE CLEANING REMINDER

Time to have your furnace cleaned and the filter changed. While the service person is there, he should also check the hot water heater.

PROPANE GAS TANKS ON BBQ GRILLS

With the coming of winter, many residents will use or store their gas grill in their garage. This not only presents a serious safety hazard, but is against the town’s fire laws and our own insurance regulations to store the tanks inside. If the valve starts to leak, the gas could ignite with a simple spark, and the entire residence could blow up. These tanks have been known to destroy entire buildings. **PLEASE BE AWARE OF THIS WARNING.**

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

In each laundry area, there is a shut-off valve for the clothes washer water supply. This should be turned off at all times, except when the washer is being used! If the valve is left on, the hoses can weaken due to the water pressure and after several years tend to burst. This easily can flood the surrounding area with 3” to 4” of water in a short period of time. Save yourself a lot of unnecessary problems and remember to keep the water valve shut off when not using the washing machine. If you need more instructions, please call the office and we will be happy to show you how to work the shut off valve.

RIDGEFIELD CONDOMINIUM TRUST “COMMUNITY POLICY” RULES AND REGULATIONS

20. **MINIMUM HEAT REQUIREMENT** All units shall be heated at all times so as to maintain minimum temperature in such Units of 60° F so as to avoid the freezing of pipes, plumbing facilities, and the like. If any Unit owner fails to maintain a 60° F temperature as aforesaid, the Trustees shall have the right to access each Unit at any time to increase the heating in order to maintain the minimum temperature or in order to repair any damage caused by the failure to maintain the temperature aforesaid: and any heating bills thus incurred, or any repair bills thus incurred, shall be paid by the applicable Unit Owners, and until so paid, shall constitute a lien against such Unit pursuant to Section 6 of said Chapter 183A - Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws.