

# Preventing Damage to Your Home While You're Away for the Holidays

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Millions of homeowners travel during the holiday season. They may visit relatives in other states, or take the family on a ski trip for the holidays. Of course, with the winter travel season comes risks of severe or even catastrophic property damage. Fortunately, by preparing house for extended vacation before you leave on your winter trip, you can protect your home and property from most weather-related damage.

## Prevent Water Damage

One of the most common and costly forms of residential property destruction caused by winter weather elements is water damage. In most cases, the damage is avoidable by using a house checklist before vacation, which should include taking basic preventive measures, such as:

- **Clean your gutters:** Gutters may be packed with fall leaves and debris. Ensure proper drainage to prevent ice dams from forming that can cause leaks in your home.
- **Check your sump pump:** Test to ensure the pump is working properly when needed. Replace an old unreliable pump before you travel, vs. risking a flood while you're gone.
- **Turn off your main water valve:** Locate your home's main water valve, and shut it down to prevent the risk of a leak or pipe break flooding your home while you're away.
- **Turn off outside sprinklers and faucets:** If these are not yet shut down for the season, do that to avoid exterior flooding from a frozen pipe break.

- Unhook your garden hose: If the hose is still attached, unhook it from the water source to avoid risking a frozen outdoor pipe that can burst and flood around your foundation.
- Install a water leak alarm: Use innovative leak detectors in areas vulnerable to the greatest risk of leaking to prevent extensive water damage in case of a severe leak.

## How to Prevent Fire Damage While You're Away

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Home fires are one of the leading causes of property damage and loss in the United States. You can help protect your home from many types of fire hazards while you're gone for the holidays by taking these essential fire damage precautions:

- Trim branches away from your house: If autumn winds and winter ice and snow have left branches leaning on your home, trim trees to prevent a house fire in an electrical storm.
- Check all smoke alarms: Test all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and replace batteries in all units as needed.
- Inspect your furnace: The best time for a professional furnace inspection is in the fall, but it's advisable to examine it again yourself before a long winter trip.
- Shut off the gas: Have the gas supply coming into your home shut off temporarily as needed for the safety of your home and the neighborhood while you're away.
- Store flammables safely: Keep flammables away from the furnace, electrical outlets, and windows. Direct winter sunlight can be very intense and can ignite a fire through a window when it is concentrated on a flammable liquid or a rag with such residue.
- Don't leave appliances running: Don't put in that final load of dishes or clothes to wash as you depart. Leaving machines running while you're not home is a flood risk.
- Unplug appliances and electronic devices: Shut off the breaker for the water heater (if it is a dedicated breaker) and unplug anything that will not be in use while you're away.
- Make your home look occupied: A vacant home is more vulnerable to arson. Avoid the risk of your home being targeted by using lights on timers, and having mail held at the post office, or asking a neighbor to gather it.

## Tell Your Neighbors You'll be Gone

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What happens when a house sits empty? The answer is a surprising number of possible disastrous developments, including anything from water damage to a catastrophic house fire. Good neighbors are great assets to homeowners. Having someone nearby who is willing to keep an eye out for signs of issues at your property while you're away can give you greater peace of mind about things at home while traveling. So, ask a nearby neighbor to check on your house occasionally while you're away.

## We're Your Utah Disaster Cleanup Specialists.

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You can accomplish much to protect your home from disaster while you're away on vacation by following the preventive steps above. However, if your home becomes damaged by water, sewage, fire, smoke, or mold while you're traveling, you can be confident that your local disaster restoration services experts are here to help you.

We provide safe and effective cleanup, board-up, repair, and rebuilding and related restoration services, including mold abatement, needed due to severe weather damage or other causes.

**If you need water or fire disaster rehab specialists to clean up and restore your home, call Utah Flood Cleanup at (801) 416-2666, or contact us here online for help.**

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### **Utah Flood Cleanup**

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We are disaster cleanup experts located in the state of Utah. We perform cleanup for water damage, floods, mold, fire & more. Give us a call at 801-416-2666 if you're in need of assistance.