

Closing up the cottage for winter?

Winter is fast approaching, and it's already time to close up your three-season cottage. There are several steps to follow if you want to prevent damage caused by snow or frost, or other incidents. Here is a handy checklist to help you get it all done before snowfall.

AROUND THE PROPERTY

- Store the garden furniture or cover it with a tarp
- Remove all watercraft (e.g., canoe, pedal boat, kayak) from the water and store them
- Disconnect and store the garden hose
- Store the barbecue or cover it, and disconnect it from the propane tank
- Trim overhanging branches that might break off and damage the cottage

COTTAGE — EXTERIOR

- Check for and plug up holes that could provide access to harmful critters
- Place a cap or cover on the chimney
- Check the caulking around doors and windows, and repair any damaged sections
- Clean the gutters
- Inspect the roof for damaged shingles and replace them if necessary
- Inspect the septic tank and call a professional if necessary

COTTAGE — INTERIOR

Kitchen:

- Empty the pantry and bring home any food, even canned goods
- Empty, clean and disconnect the refrigerator, and leave the door slightly ajar to avoid moisture build-up

Bedrooms:

- Remove the sheets, and store them in a dry place (such as a sealed bag)

Living room:

- Clean the fireplace and close the damper vent

Water supply:

- Shut off the water and drain all the appliance pipes:
 - washing machine
 - dishwasher
 - toilets
 - S-shaped pipe under the sink
 - bathtub
 - shower
- Pour plumbing antifreeze into the drain pipes of the above-mentioned appliances
- Drain the water heater by attaching a hose to the purge valve
- Turn off the power to the water pump

All rooms:

- Disconnect all electrical appliances, except those that will be in operation while you're away (such as an alarm system)
- Check the condition of your sump pump, if applicable
- Lower the heat to between 5°C and 7°C, or turn it off completely (in which case, turn off the circuit breakers for the heaters on the electrical panel)
- Store any items that can start a fire, such as paper, rags and chemicals
- Leave the curtains or blinds slightly open to show that there are no valuable objects in the house
- Lock the doors and windows
- Turn on the alarm system before you leave, if applicable
- Check your insurance policy for your secondary residence