

February Newsletter

Tips for Minimizing Winter Headaches

Written by Mark E. Timmins, J.D.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



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Being from Iowa, I have always thought that the first snowfall of the year is beautiful and brings a little nostalgia of my childhood. Every snowfall after that is the worst and makes me want to move to Florida. For most MHP owners in the Midwest, I assume they probably relate more to the latter. With winter in full swing, our team thought it would be helpful to provide some direction on winter weather solutions that can be big benefits to your tenants and keep you from spending money on problems that could be avoided. It is not fun for your managers to be out there trying to help a tenant out in the cold. It is also not fun for them to take calls from angry tenants about not having water. The following tips may cut down on wear and tear on community managers during the frigid winters.

COMMUNICATING WITH TENANTS

Communication with your tenants is important to help keep them on top of home maintenance items. As you know, many tenants blow off notices

and newsletters throughout the year, so why would it be any different during wintertime? Posting, mailing and emailing a form “Winterize Letter” laying out necessary information is a good step, but also training your manager to give verbal reminders to those they interact with can always be helpful. Ultimately, you can post a billboard in your park telling your tenants to winterize and many still won’t read it. I have included a sample “Winterize Letter” below. It is important to lay out what tenants are responsible for and what you are responsible for.

SKIRTING

It is important that the skirting is fixed and secured, and that there aren’t any gaps. Along with the elements negatively affecting the home, critters can cause all sorts of problems. Raccoons or other critters will get in and eventually chew on anything exposed. They tend to like any insulation and heat tape.



If you did your taping but didn't secure your skirting enough to keep rodents out, it may be for naught.

HEAT TAPE

Heat tape can be your best friend. If you are an experienced manager or owner in cold weather climates, this is old news to you. If you are new to park ownership or new to a cold weather market, heat tape can be very helpful. For those of you unfamiliar with heat tape, it is an electrical cable, not an adhesive tape. It is used to wrap metal or plastic pipes to keep them from freezing. When it is -10 degrees outside, it can be your best friend. Part of your job as the owner or manager is to provide direction on ways to keep homes from freezing up and, obviously, install this on park owned homes. Inform your tenants what heat tape is, how it's used (it's easy to install) and tell them to plug it in.



Remember to install heat tape around water pipes can keep them from freezing.

PLUMBING TIPS AND TRICKS

Sometimes, even with proper skirting, heat tape and insulation in place, it is just too cold. There are some simple tricks to keep lines from freezing. When temperatures are low, it is always a good idea to keep water trickling in your tap. I used this in my old house. When temps hit zero, I would let the water trickle because moving water in the pipes will keep it from freezing. If they do freeze, turn the faucets on all the way and find a hair dryer. Aim it directly at the pipe as close to the source as possible until the water starts to pour out. A simple trickle won't bust anyone's budget and is a simple fix.

Another method to help heat circulate better to water pipes is to open the cabinets on extremely cold days or nights. While the home may be in the high 60's, your exterior cabinets might be much cooler than that. Simply opening the cabinets will allow the heat to circulate and can keep those pipes open.



On really cold days, keeping your water tap at a trickle can help pipes from freezing and bursting.

FINAL NOTE

It's a simple fact of life – winter comes every year! Be proactive! So many of the problems in manufactured homes that come with winter weather can be mitigated or eliminated if people just spend a couple hours in the fall to take some cheap and effective steps to protect pipes and fix skirting. Don't be one of the many that are trying to winterize homes in blowing winds and a foot of snow.

Name:
P.O. Box 457
Cedaredge, CO 81413
Manager Phone:

Date:

Dear (Estimado) Resident,

This letter is to remind you that the winter months are quickly approaching. It is each resident's responsibility to make sure your home is winterized and prepared for winter. All garden hoses should be removed from outside faucets and the faucets should be free from dripping water. Make sure that you do not have water or sewer leaks under your home. Once any leaks have been corrected, properly wrap the water pipes with insulation and heat tape. The insulation and heat tape should also cover the outside connection pipes and meters. Each resident should also make sure that the skirting located at the bottom portion of the home is fastened and secure. This will help protect the pipes underneath the home from unnecessary exposure to cold temperatures, as open skirting acts as a wind tunnel and keeps the cold air trapped under the home. Taking these preventative steps will not only help keep pipes from freezing, but will help with the energy costs of heating your home. The mobile home park is not responsible for broken or frozen pipes so it is very important that you ensure your home is properly prepared.

In addition, it is against community rules to let your faucets drip all winter to prevent freezing. Doing so causes large water bills and forces us to increase lot rent to cover the expense.

If you notice water or sewer leaks on vacant lots or other tenants' homes, please notify management immediately so we can work to get these problems corrected. We wish you all a safe, healthy, & warm winter!

Esta carta es para recordarles que los meses de invierno se acercan rápidamente. Es responsabilidad de cada residente en asegurarse de que su hogar está preparado para el invierno. Todas las mangueras deben ser retiradas de los llaves exteriores y las llaves deben estar libres de goteo de agua. Asegúrese de que usted no tenga fugas de agua o de alcantarillado debajo de su casa. Una vez que las fugas se han corregido, envuelva correctamente las tuberías de agua y alcantarillado con aislamiento y cinta térmica. La insulación y cinta térmica también debe cubrir los tubos de conexión exteriores y metros. Cada residente también debe asegurarse de que el faldón situado en la parte inferior de la casa esté sujeto y seguro. Esto ayudará a proteger las tuberías debajo de la casa de la exposición innecesaria a temperaturas frías, el faldón abierto actúa como un túnel de mantiene las tuberías sin congelar, pero le ayudará con los costos de energía de la calefacción de su casa. El parqueadero no es responsable de las tuberías rotas o congeladas por lo que es muy importante que se asegure que sus hogares se hayan preparado adecuadamente.

Además, está en contra de las reglas de la comunidad en dejar sus llaves gotiando todo el invierno para evitar la congelación. Si lo hace, provoca grandes facturas de agua y nos obliga a aumentar la renta de terreno para cubrir los gastos.

Si observa agua o de alcantarillado fugas en lotes baldíos o casas de otros inquilinos, por favor notifique a la manager de inmediato para que podamos trabajar en conseguir estos problemas. Les deseamos a todos un invierno seguro, saludable y cálido!

Sincerely (Atentamente),

Manager:
Name:

UPDATED MHP RENT SURVEYS:

Want access to up-to-date rent information for mobile home parks in your area? Contact me to see the 2023 rent surveys for Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Iowa City, and Davenport.

Email: joannestevens@iowarealty.com

Phone: +1 319 378 6786

SAVE THE DATE:

MHI Winter Meeting

Date and Location TBA

More information: <https://www.manufacturedhousing.org/events-landing/winter-meeting/>

MHI Congress and Expo

4/3-5/2024

MCM Grand Las Vegas

More information: <https://www.congressandexpo.com/>

WHAT IS YOUR PARK WORTH?

You ought to know the market value of your real estate investments today! We are always happy to do a **FREE, NO OBLIGATION**, Real Estate Review for your park(s). If this is something you would like to set up, reach out to one of us today!

YOUR TEAM

Joanne is a specialist in listing and selling mobile home parks and manufactured housing communities throughout the U.S. With her 20-plus years of experience in developing, zoning, owning, retailing, managing, turning around, and brokering parks, she can maximize your sale price.

Jordan Bouslog is a Manufactured Housing and Investment Specialist at Cushman & Wakefield Iowa Commercial Advisors. He has over 10 years of real estate experience and has completed over \$120,000,000 in sales.

Mark E. Timmins, J.D. is a Manufactured Housing and Investment Specialist at Cushman & Wakefield Iowa Commercial Advisors. As a former practicing attorney, Mark brings 7 years of education and experience to benefit his clients over his eight years of real estate brokerage.

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