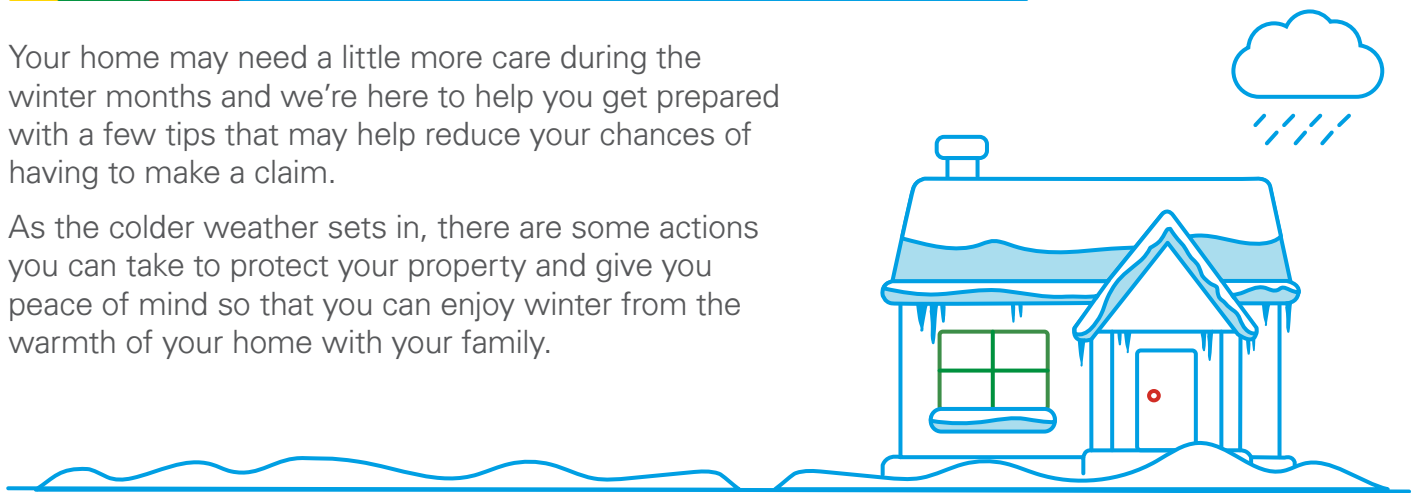


Freeze! Check out our tips to help you protect your home this winter...

Your home may need a little more care during the winter months and we're here to help you get prepared with a few tips that may help reduce your chances of having to make a claim.

As the colder weather sets in, there are some actions you can take to protect your property and give you peace of mind so that you can enjoy winter from the warmth of your home with your family.



INDOORS

- Check all taps in the home regularly. If water is coming out slowly, this could be a clue pipes have frozen.
- Keep pipes and loft storage tanks insulated. If pipes do freeze, apply heat to the area with a hot water bottle or hairdryer.
- Check insulation is up to standard to keep energy bills low and guard against damp and interior mould.
- In case a pipe does bust, make sure you know where your stopcock is and that it turns easily.
- Check around window frames, doors and letterboxes for draughts.
- Enlist the services of a professional chimney sweep before lighting a fire, to prevent chimney fires and stop dangerous smoke and carbon monoxide entering the home.

OUTDOORS

- Switch off the water supply of any pipes not being used throughout winter.
- Turn off indoor valves leading to outdoor pipes, then open outdoor taps and leave them to drain.
- Clear a snowy roof with a roof rake to stop ice dams from forming.
- Check brickwork and external pipes for cracks.
- Keep gutters clear of sticks, leaves and other debris to stop water damage to exterior and interior walls.

LEAVING THE HOME?

- An active alarm system or times lighting can make all the difference in deterring thieves.
- Have a trusted family member or neighbour check on the property, adjusting lights and curtains, parking on the driveway and clearing any tell-tale post.
- For added peace of mind check radiators for leaks and make sure that your boiler service history is up-to-date.
- The winter months can put a lot of pressure on a central heating system. To keep the boiler ticking over, keep the heating on for an hour or two every day - even if you're away. An active alarm system or times lighting can make all the difference in deterring thieves.

Always be cautious when undertaking any task that you're not fully familiar with as you could injure yourself or those around you, seek professional help where required.

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