



Winterization Memo November 30, 2017

Fireplaces

Please **do not** burn Duraflame or other manufactured logs in your fireplace. Watergate fireplaces are "zero clearance" pre-fabricated fireplaces rather than masonry fireplaces. The manufacturer did not design the fireplaces to handle the intense heat generated by artificial logs, which can damage or crack the firebox and create a fire hazard. The operating manual for our fireplaces has been posted to our website at:

<http://www.watergateofalexandria.com/Fireplace Manual.pdf>

Chimney Inspections

Our insurance company suggests that you have your chimneys inspected and cleaned, regularly. Chimney sweeps are relatively inexpensive and available in the area (please see the [Vendors](#) page of our website for suggestions). Inspecting and cleaning your chimney is a good idea for your own safety and that of the entire community.

Outside Water Faucets

As the cold weather approaches, it is necessary to winterize exterior water faucets. To accomplish this you must determine the type of faucet(s) you have. There are three possibilities.

Standard. You will find the turn-off valve inside your unit either in the closet housing the water heater or under the kitchen sink. Once you have turned the faucet off inside, open the faucet on the outside. This will allow the remaining water to drain and prevent freezing and possible broken pipes. We recommend that, once drained, you leave the outside faucet open throughout the winter.

Frost Proof. Although the name implies that draining this type of faucet is not necessary, servicing these faucets is important each winter. Two metal rings surround the water faucet. The top ring must be turned and pushed up, allowing the water in the pipe to drain out. It is not necessary to turn off the water inside; however, we recommend that you do so as a safety precaution. The top ring, which is turned and pushed up, must remain in the up position.

Patio Floor. A patio floor faucet is designed to automatically winterize itself when normally turned off. Staff will turn these off at the water elements. If you have this type of faucet, you need only ensure that staff have turned the water off securely. Watergate has a supply of thermal covers (and getting more is not difficult) for common-use outdoor faucets. These worked well and we encourage you to purchase these and place one over your outdoor faucets.

Garage Door Electric Eyes

The return of cold and wet weather may cause moisture to build up on the reflectors, which regulate the electric-eye garage door openers. Occasionally, fog or moisture will cause a film on the reflector that interrupts the electric-eye beam. If the doors do not open or close, try wiping off the red reflector at the bottom of each door with a dry cloth before reporting a garage door breakdown.

Heat Pumps

To ensure the proper operation of and prevent damage to exterior heat pumps, it is essential that you clear any accumulated snow and ice off your unit. Additionally, you should clean or replace the filter in the attic air handler monthly. Please note that maintenance of these units is your responsibility. We strongly recommend that you have your HVAC system inspected at least annually (please see the [Vendors](#) page of our website for suggested service providers).

Snow and Ice Removal

When a big storm strikes, there is no simple and quick way to dig out. Oscar Giron, our maintenance supervisor, makes every effort to remove snow and ice in a timely manner. However, clearing the walk in front of your door periodically during a heavy snowstorm can save hours of work for a few minutes of your time. It would be a wonderful gesture if you continued down the walk to clear a path for that neighbor who is unable to do so. We will place a supply of ice melt in each garage and in some of the covered archways for your use; please **do not use salt**, as it will damage the plantings and sidewalks.

Thermostat Settings

You must leave some heat on in your unit even if you are going away for an extended period. If you turn the heat off completely, there is a great danger of frozen pipes. We request that your thermostat be turned to **heat** and set no lower than **55-60 degrees**. We also recommend that you arrange for a neighbor or friend to check your unit on a daily basis during very cold weather as a precaution. Since the Association does not have keys to any units at Watergate and may be unable to contact the owner of a residence during an emergency, the Association will charge you the cost of obtaining access to your unit in the event of an emergency.

Emergencies and Further Assistance

The Board appreciates your help and cooperation regarding these matters. If you have a weather-related or other emergency, please call SFMC's after-hours emergency help number, 888.980.8958.

If you have any questions or you need routine assistance, please contact our property manager at SFMC or any board member (our contact information is posted to our website. You can reach Oscar Giron at 703.414.9625.