

How easy is it to sell a home that has been damaged by water or vandalized ?

THIS IS AN EXERPT FROM MY LAST NEWSLETTER

I inspected six properties earlier this year that had major damage caused by frozen water pipes. Three of these properties were "listed" (and vacant), two were owned by "snowbirds" who were in Arizona and the last one was left vacant by an owner who was working in Germany for a "just" few months.

These properties vacated **BEFORE** it got cold, and it looks like: 1) the heat source was shut off; 2) the utility service was cancelled; or 3) heaters were in the AC mode.

These homes had to be taken off the market until major repairs were completed - damage was between \$10,000 and \$30,000. In two cases, responsibility and liability for damage and repairs is still not determined.

To add insult to injury, most of the repairs were **NOT** covered by insurance - most policies specify that the home **"must not be left vacant"** for an extended time - particularly during the heating season.

I am repeating this article simply to stress that **vacant homes are always left at risk, not only from frozen water service, but by vandalism, weather damage and criminal activity (B&E).**

SNOWBIRD HOME WATCH SERVICES

Susan and I saw a fantastic opportunity for a value-added benefit and perfect fit to our home inspection business. We started **"Snowbird Home Watch Services"**. This is a once-a-week "home visit" which affords homeowners the piece of mind when leaving their homes vacant for whatever reason. This is our fourth year in the **Home Watch** business and we are currently booking clients for our fifth season. For more information about our services, please see www.snowbirdsecurity.ca.

Our primary services has been for snowbirds on extended winter holidays, but we have also been helping agents and homeowners who have vacant, listed homes on the market over winter.



What can we do for you?

"LISTING" AGENTS

1. Weekly interior home visits, including checking the heating and water systems, door locks, windows, etc.
2. Check of the exterior of the home - weather damage, vandalism, falling trees, snow damage, etc.
3. We can turn up heat, turn on the water, and flush toilets prior to every showing
4. We'll notify listing agents of any concerns which might affect the showing or listing of the property.
5. We'll watch for pests - rodents, insects, animals
6. Monitor contracted snow and lawn maintenance
7. Ensure that heat or AC settings, windows and doors have been returned to previous settings after a showing
8. We can arrange for repairs, upgrading and cleaning - things needed to make the home show better

HOMEOWNERS WHO ARE AWAY FOR A WINTER VACATION

1. Weekly interior home visits, checking heat and water systems, door locks, windows, lighting, etc.
2. Pick up and/or forward mail and remove newspapers
3. Check the exterior of the home - weather damage, vandalism, falling trees, snow damage, etc.
4. Adjust light timers and window coverings
5. We'll watch for pests - rodents, insects, animals
6. Monitor contracted snow and lawn maintenance
7. Facilitate access for irrigation and pool shut down
8. Water plants

OWNERS WHO HAVE LISTED AND ARE NOW LIVING ELSEWHERE

1. All items above, plus;
2. Ensure that heat or AC settings, windows & door locks have been returned to pre-showing settings
3. Arrange for maintenance as suggested by your agent