

WEST NIPISSING OUEST POLICE

Municipality of West Nipissing
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***“Professional policing in partnership with our community”
“Service professionnel, en partenariat avec la communauté,”***

Dear Cottager,

Owning a cottage is one of the best things going. But when the air gets colder and the leaves are changing colours, this means that you need to think about closing for the winter months.

There is a lot to do in order to do everything required to keep your cottage safe and sound. According to Allstate Insurance, the top two cottage insurance claims are due to damage caused by water and wind during the winter and early spring.

Here are a few tips:

- Inspect your roof. Roof leaks make up the majority of water-damage claims. Replace any missing or broken shingles.
- Cover your windows to deter thieves. Close all the window blinds and curtains. For any windows that are without blinds or curtains, consider using a bed sheet. Take valuables home with you.
- Shut off and drain plumbing. Lingering water can freeze in the pipes over the winter, which could cause them to burst.
- Trim overhanging and dead branches. Weight from snow can cause branches to snap, which may result in damage to your cottage.
- Pack up all food, including canned goods. Dry food and canned goods can still attract animals if left behind over the winter months. To prevent animals from making a home while you are away, throw a few mothballs around and remove all food from the cottage.
- Defrost the refrigerator. Leave the door open a little to prevent mildew from growing. An open box of baking soda placed inside the fridge will also help neutralize odours.
- Remove fire hazards. Toss or take with you any loose papers, newspapers, old rags and chemicals. Turn off all utilities and unplug all appliances.
- Block off the flues, stovepipes and chimneys. Make sure you have closed the flue on your stove. Chimneys from fireplaces or woodstoves should be professionally checked to ensure they don't have hazardous amounts of creosote accumulation. Also, sealing flues, stovepipes and chimneys with a metal cap should keep the birds out.
- Clean out eaves troughs. Make sure they are clear of leaf buildup and saplings, which can obstruct drainage when the snow melts in the spring.
- Say goodbye. Have one last walk-through before you leave and check for anything left outside that should be stored for the winter. Ensure sheds, bunkies, garages, windows and doors are properly locked. And finally, if possible, ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your place with regular security checks.

Cottages are a target for thieves especially in the winter months. The West Nipissing Police Service receives numerous complaints from cottage owners especially when opening up the cottages in the springtime. The WNPS does regular patrols during the winter months in order to check on cottages but thefts are still an ongoing issue.

If items like these need to be left behind, they should be clearly marked with paint, permanent marker or an engraver. Serial numbers should also be kept on file just in case things go missing. This kind of information is very important for the police if ever these items need to be identified or are located at a later time. Even if the camp owner can take a few minutes and videotape the items left behind at camp, at least your personal belongings can be documented and submitted to police if required.

On behalf of the West Nipissing Police Service, please play safe and keep your belongings safe.

R.C.J. Seguin
Chief of Police
West Nipissing Police Service