

Closing Up The Cottage

To reduce the likelihood of unwanted surprises, here are some things to remember:

- Turn off the main power
- Lock all doors and windows
- Block any new mouse holes with steel wool
- Clean off your outdoor furniture and bring it inside
- Replace and test batteries in smoke alarms and CO 2 detectors
- Inspect the roof for damaged shingles and replace them if necessary
- Store your water sports equipment in a protected area off the ground and covered
- Do a walk-around inspection. Check the siding and caulking around all windows and doors
- Clean out the eaves troughs to allow the melting snow to drain properly and inspect all fascia boards
- Leave a spare key and your phone number with a neighbour or someone else you trust who can check the cottage regularly
- Trim back overhanging branches/trees that risk dumping of extra snow and ice and cut back dead or damaged branches everywhere
- Close any propane tank valves and remove all fire hazards from your property, such as paper, newspaper, old rags, and chemicals and empty remaining gasoline from your lawnmower

A lot of costly spring repairs arise due to improperly drained pipes, pumps and tanks. Be sure to cover the following:

- Drain and disconnect any outside tanks and pumps
- Flush all toilets and remove any remaining water in the tank or toilet bowl
- Check all pipes and connections before you drain – mark any leaks for repairs
- Check that supply lines all slope down to a low point under or outside the cottage
- Turn off the power to the water pump and the hot water tank. Drain the hot water tank
- Open all the taps inside and outside the cottage, then open the drain valves to let the water drain out. Leave them open through the winter

Take photos of everything. In the unfortunate event of fire, theft, or weather damage, it will make the claims process quicker and smoother if you have documentation of how things appeared when you last left the premises.