

Protecting unattended homes Tips to keep your property safe during a lockdown

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadians are staying home as much as possible. For people with secondary properties, we've prepared some tips that may help keep these properties safe while being unused for longer periods of time.

Ideally, get a local service to carry out these steps for you— if you don't already have such a relationship in place, consider getting help from a neighbour to identify a local service provider, a local cottage management company or a local handyman.



Protect against wildlife

- ✓ Check the attic for any pests that may have taken up residence, such as wasps, raccoons or squirrels.
- ✓ Cover mattresses and bedding with plastic sheeting to keep rodents out.
- ✓ Close stove pipes, chimney flues and fireplace doors to prevent unwanted animals from getting inside.
- ✓ Worried about bears? Consider installing heavy shutters— not plywood—on windows to prevent them from getting into the house.
- ✓ Remove all food from the house to avoid attracting wildlife. (Canned goods are fine to stay.)

Protect against the unpredictable

- ✓ Ask a local resident if they can periodically check on your property while you are away, or hire a property management company to do so.
- ✓ If it is safe to do so, trim any tree branches that could interfere with power lines or your house.
- ✓ If you haven't done so already, lock ATVs and other recreational vehicles in a shed.
- ✓ Have a note placed on your front door, advising any potential thieves that valuables have been removed or locked securely.

Protect against water damage

- ✓ Inspect gutters and drain spouts for any obstructions that could lead to ice damming during the spring freeze-thaw cycle.
- ✓ Ensure that you've turned off power and water to the property. If it is located in area that is still experiencing freezing temperatures, use environmentally friendly anti-freeze to keep pipes from freezing and breaking.
- ✓ During flood season, ensure that floating docks are secured safely on land.
- ✓ If you have a sump pump, ensure it is working.

Protect against fire

- ✓ Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Replace the batteries each year.
- ✓ Clean any wood-burning stoves or fireplaces.
- ✓ If you leave the power on for an alarm system or a sump pump, unplug major appliances to lower the risk of an electrical fire.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your broker.