

## **Winterized and Vacant Homes Understanding Winterized & Vacant Homes - Why?**

It's to your Advantage to understand the Implications...

Especially When buying a "Bank Foreclosure"...!

There is a concern with vacant homes that are vacant over the winter:

The plumbing can freeze, which can cause major leaks and severe water damage.

Winterized – What does that mean and precautions required with a vacant home.

**First**, water is shut off to the house.

\*\*\* This means that only a limited inspection can be performed and can cause buyer concerns.

**Second**, it means that usually all the faucets inside and outside the home have been opened to allow air in and water out.

\*\*\* In the case of homes that just have the water turned off, (Not Winterized – Just Vacant), People touring the house sometimes turn faucets on and they are sometimes left open, which is a concern when turning the water back on.

**Third**, compressed air is usually attached to one of the open lines and the water is forced out of the now closed off system.

\*\*\* This is to make sure that there is no water left in the pipes to freeze during the winter months. In the case of homes that just have the water turned off, (Not Winterized – Just Vacant), there could be water still left in the pipes and they could have frozen over the winter, causing broken pipes, which is a concern when turning the water back on.

**Fourth**, anti-freeze has been added to many drain traps and commodes to prevent them from freezing. In the case of homes that just have the water turned off, (Not Winterized – Just Vacant), there could be water still in the drain traps that froze over the winter causing a concern for possible leakage.

\*\*\* Drain traps are there to keep sewer gas from entering the house. They should not be drained, although anti-freeze is added to keep them from freezing and cracking.

## **Danger!!**

- Water Heaters in most cases have been emptied.
- Commodes are often taped shut.
- To perform a complete inspection, We need water – What do we do Now?
- De-winterize the System.
- Have a professional de-winterize the home. They will go through a careful step-by-step procedure to make sure all the faucets are shut off to keep the house from being flooded.
- After all the faucets are closed and the water heater and commodes are reset properly only then should the water be turned back on. **This is very important...**
- Make sure the Water Heater is full before turning on power to the unit.
- Danger – Extra Precaution.
- Areas to pay extra attention to when a home is being de-winterized are:
- Kitchen Icemaker line
- Water Heater and Laundry lines.

## **Can or Should the Inspector De-Winterize the Home?**

This is not recommended.

They can do it but they step into a high liability position, It isn't worth it.

We recommend you use an outside source that is fully prepared to handle it, one that understands and has a step-by-step plan to put the water back in use and can re-winterize the home again if necessary.

**P.S. We recommend that all utilities are turned back on so that a complete and thorough inspection can be performed.**

**I hope this information has been helpful to you.**

**Please don't keep me a secret. The best compliment I can receive is a referral from you to a friend, associate or family member.**