

After the Polar-Vortex: Inspecting for Hidden Winter Damage

❑ *1. Take a peek at your pipes*

Check the **exposed pipes in attics and crawl spaces**. If you suspect you have a frozen pipe, open the tap to relieve any pressure that might be building in the line. Next, **gently warm the frozen pipe using a hairdryer, heating pad, or even a hot water bottle**. Keep a close eye on the pipe as it thaws and be ready to shut off the water at the meter (or to the fixture) if you spring a leak.

❑ *2. Consider your car*

Be prepared to deal with issues like: **low battery levels, cracked belts and wiper blades, low tire pressure, and frozen fluids**. Having **jumper cables and winter-blend wiper fluid will help with battery and frozen fluid issues**. Visually inspecting your car before driving after extreme cold will help you spot low tire pressure and issues with cracked belts or wiper blades.

❑ *3. Restock and replenish*

At the beginning of winter, and immediately **following any extreme cold snaps, you'll want to restock your supplies**. First, **top off the fuel in your generator** and check that all connections and belts are shipshape. Next, **restock the pantry with provisions and necessities**.

❑ *4. Check for damage to trees and landscaping*

Signs that a tree or limb may be damaged include **missing bark, deep cracks, holes in the trunk, and trunks that are leaning more than 15 degrees**.

❑ *5. Look in on your neighbors*

In particular, **seniors and people with disabilities are at added risk of hypothermia and carbon monoxide poisoning**, especially during power or heat outages.