

COTTAGE CLOSING CHECKLIST



CREATING YOUR CHECKLIST

Closing days are busy! Boats come out, food is packed, buildings are prepared for a long winter, and the last jobs are finished before the last drive home of the year. Whether this is your first closing or your fiftieth, creating a short, documented closing routine for your property can help make the closing process smoother and prepare your property for the off-season ahead.

Every cottage is unique and has its own special tricks to make a seasonal closing run more smoothly. While you may have the process down to a science, creating a written plan for closing can help others fill in when necessary. Whether you are handing over some duties to the next generation or considering that special trip that has you away for closing weekend for the first time, having a written process that others can follow helps keep your property well protected for the winter! When creating your plan, start by matching the plan to the way the cottage is actually built, occupied and used. A property accessible year-round versus a remote or water-access property will require different steps and preparation.

Water and Heat

If the water and heat systems will be shut down, be sure to note the importance and steps of draining vulnerable plumbing. Find the instructions or write out steps for emptying pumps, filters, water heaters and other appliances. If heat will remain on, note the appropriate temperature to set for the building and plumbing system's protection. If there will be no heat throughout the winter, ensuring all plumbing and appliances are fully drained and valves/faucets left open is important in preventing freezing damage. This type of damage to plumbing or appliances in an unheated dwelling is typically not covered by insurance, so ensuring a full drain is important. Shutting off one valve does not protect every line, so be sure to specifically note any outdoor taps, washing machines, dishwashers, ice makers and low points in the system which may need separate attention.

Confirm electrical and heating systems are left in a safe condition. Use qualified professionals where servicing, winterization or repairs are required. If you have used a wood stove or fireplace more in the colder days leading to closing, be sure to include instructions for clearing out ash and to consider schedule a cleaning of the system next year when the cottage opens, and to ensure any damper or flue is closed securely.

Protecting the Building

Be sure to include preventative steps like inspecting the roof, flashing, eaves troughs, windows and doors with a focus on removing debris that may hold water or block drainage. Snow load can be a considerable strain on roofs and drainage issues can create pockets for ice damming. Your checklist might include scheduling a roofer inspection where required, especially on older roofs nearing the end of their lifespan. Securing outdoor furniture, barbecues, tools, ladders, docks and other seasonal equipment is another important step to prevent damage.

A complete kitchen clean is important to prevent attracting unwelcome animal guests. Include steps in the checklist to remove all food and do a thorough clean of the kitchen fridge, stove, countertops, etc. Any valuable items that might create a vandalism/theft hazard should be listed to be removed. Taking photos of the interior and exterior of the property as part of the closing checklist can be helpful, especially if you're sharing responsibilities of opening/closing with others or to help show the state of the property to an insurance adjuster if damage takes place during the off-season and a claim needs to be opened.

Important Contacts

A checklist should include a list of key contacts for assistance where necessary. Easy to access information for local roofers, plumbers, electricians, etc. where available can help handle any problem they may encounter during the closing!

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Insurance

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