

MY GO-2-GUY Handyman



BASIC EMERGENCY KIT

Wow—wasn't that an ice storm we survived! It certainly provided a unique Christmas season adventure. Some homes were without power for 5-6 days in extreme cold temperatures. Fortunately many parts of the city were OK so you could bunk in with friend and family.

It was however and reminder we have an aging utilities support infrastructure which may fail us again, so every home should have an emergency kit to help survive these crisis.

Being a Scout leader form many years we've stressed being prepared to several generation of youth but never remind home owners of this, so we thought now is a good time to highlight the need for a home emergency kit.



We keep our supplies just on a shelf in the basement but a large Rubbermaid container or box will work as well.

Here is a list of some basic needs recommended for a 72-hour survival kit:

- ◆ 4-litres of water per person, per day for drinking, cooking, and cleaning.
- ◆ Food that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dried foods. Consider single-pot meal to minimize preparation, cooking, and cleaning.
- ◆ A manual can opener
- ◆ Candles, flashlight and spare batteries
- ◆ Portable radio and spare batteries
- ◆ First aid kit
- ◆ Matches in a waterproof container
- ◆ Small fire extinguisher



- ◆ If you have pets—extra water and food for them
- ◆ Books, games, puzzles and card to help pass the time
- ◆ Personal hygiene items
- ◆ Large traps and tape to create emergency shelter if required
- ◆ Single burner portable stove that runs on propane or kerosene
- ◆ Sleeping bag for each person
- ◆ Cash

This is a very basic list. If you are able to stay in your home you have many other resources, but be aware you may be asked to leave your home for safety reason so you must have a way to quickly move out with these supplies, and others

If you wish more information this site will provide more ideas and information in this regard.

<http://www.getprepared.gc.ca>

Winter Maintenance Tips

Winter has hit us hard this year with ice storms and bone chilling temperatures. As the temperature dips, the thermostat tends to rise. Unfortunately, some of that warm air will escape through various nooks and crannies. We thought it was a good time to provide some ways to cozy up your home and save energy - and perhaps shave a few dollars off your heating bills.

Let's start with your forced air heating plant. Ensure your air filter is clean because when dirty it will restrict air movement by 20%. This means you sending valuable heating dollars up the chimney rather than thru the house. While we are on filters, check and clean your humidifier

Programmable Thermostat

If you haven't already done so, installing an Energy-Star backed programmable thermostat can save in excess of \$200/year according to a CMHC study.



In the colder winter months, simply turning your down a mere 5-degrees at night will save you about 10% in energy costs.

You can get a good basic one from your local hardware store for about \$40 or a high-tech one that learns your preference and is programed thru the internet for \$250. The more expensive ones have larger colour screens and more features, but the basic unit will more than pay for itself in a single heating season.

Installation is simple:

1. Turn the power off to your furnace as this is the power source for your thermostat as well.
2. Ideally the unit should be 5-feet of the floor, on an inside wall, and never in direct sunlight. If not you should contact your service provider to relocate it.
3. Remove the old unit. If it has a mercury switch be sure to take it your local HHW dump site. You'll notice 2 or 4 wires so label them and secure them so they don't disappear into the wall.
4. Install the new mounting plate and ensure it is level. Then connect the wire per the direction and install an battery and snap into the new mounting plate.
5. Turn on the power again and program in accord with the provided directions.
6. Enjoy the savings

If you need help—give us a call.

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and try to keep the humidity level in your home at approximately 30%. If it becomes too dry the house will feel colder and if too high your windows will condensate.

Next, according to the Energy Star program, about 20 per cent of the air that moves through the ducts in your home can be lost because of leaks and poorly sealed connections. Use an aluminum duct tape or a sealant in the areas you can reach to help ensure your heat gets to rooms you need heated. (This also applies to your summer cooling).



Using an inexpensive smoke pencil you can obtain at most hardware stores to search for gaps and air-leaks around

doors, windows, pipes and wires that pass thru your exterior walls. They become very obvious when the temperatures drop outside. Use a simple acrylic sealant such as DAP ALEX-PLUS for small cracks or an expanding foam such as DAPtex to seal the larger gaps.

Watch your fans. Leaving a kitchen or bathroom ventilation fan running for more than an hour will result in a complete air exchange of your homes warm air for cold in less than 2 hours. That's expensive heated air sent out to the cold! Also, if you have a ceiling fan, reverse it for the winter so it spins clockwise, this will push that warm air from the ceiling down to the floor making the house feel more comfortable.

If you still have older single-pane windows, pick up a removable 3M or TAGO window insulator kit. They come in various sizes and are applied to the frame of the window to provide a complete air seal, keeping the warm air inside. All you need is a pair of scissors and a hairdryer.



As building codes change over time and your existing insulation settles, your attic may not be optimized to keep your house warm in today's standards. Alt-

though it may not be the best time of year, increase the R-value of your attic with a product like Roxul Rockfill, a loose insulation that you can be applied over existing insulation. There are many insulation contractors that can blow in in less than a day. Be sure they extend your soffit vents above the insulation with foam channels to ensure proper airflow.



While you're sealing your house to boost its energy efficiency, you must be aware that fuel burning appliances such as fireplaces, and furnaces generate carbon monoxide that may, due to ventilation issues, remain in the home and become deadly. It is now the law in Ontario that every home have CO2 alarm on each floor in addition to a smoke detector. Note that with the long term power outage we experience because of the ice storm, everyone should be replacing the batteries in their detectors now.



Working to serve you better



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Winter Specials

Winter is a great time to tackle those indoor projects to spruce up the house a little.

Replace Toilet **\$175**

Installing a new, customer supplied water efficient toilet can save 20% or more on water usage.

Includes:

- ◆ Labour to replace the old unit
- ◆ Place at curbside for disposal
- ◆ New 1/4-turn water shut-off and fill-tube
- ◆ New wax ring and basic mounting hardware.
- ◆ Application of silicone based seal around base of toilet in accord with current building code

Pick-up/delivery of new can be arranged for additional \$30. Disposal at city dump can be arranged for additional \$50

Paint a room **\$650**

Freshen up a room in your house by simply repainting.

Includes:

- ◆ Minor wall repairs
- ◆ Sand and wash of walls and trim
- ◆ Fresh coat of flat white ceiling paint
- ◆ 2-coats of new wall flat/eggshell paint in your colour choice
- ◆ 1-coat of fresh white semi-gloss paint on trim. (doors are extra)
- ◆ All materials included. (We use premium Benjamin Moore or Behr paints.)

Crown Moulding **\$380**

Spruce up your living-room, dining-room or a bedroom with simple crown moulding. It adds a touch of luxury.

Includes:

- ◆ Labour to source and install crown moulding for 8' x 10' room
- ◆ Alexandria 3-1/2" flat White Ogee Crown moulding
- ◆ Fill and touch-up of nail holes
- ◆ Edge sealant caulked along all wall and ceiling seams.
- ◆ Materials

(prices do not include HST)