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AVOIDING WINTER FREEZE UP

During winter weather we receive many emergency calls for no-heat, leaking zone valves or burst heating pipes.

While some of these calls are caused by some fault with the heating system, many of them are a result of stuck zone-valves, improperly set thermostats, open windows or patio doors – any of which can result in thousands of dollars damage that is typically the responsibility of the unit owner.

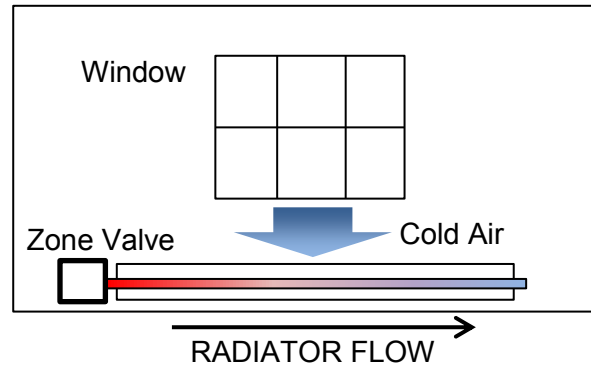
At Prevent Mechanical, as our name implies, we want to help you to avoid unnecessary repairs and you can – just by following these few simple tips...

1 – Zone Valve Maintenance. Over the summer months many residents turn their thermostat down and leave it down for months on end. The zone valves, sitting in one position with no water flowing through, can get stuck closed. We suggest that you operate your thermostat (turn it all the way up) and allow the zone valve to fully open at least every other week during the summer.

2 – During the Holidays we often have bigger gatherings of family and friends. 12 people in a room can raise the temperature by roughly the same amount as a 1,500 Watt space heater running full blast. That, combined with an oven roasting turkey for 4 – 5 hours, often makes us open a window or a patio door to cool the room. We're not saying you can't do that, but you do have to exercise some caution.

The radiator in the room has been engineered to deliver enough heat to make it comfortable in opposition to the heat lost through a closed window; it was not designed to compensate for the massive heat loss through an open window. Leaving that window open for any length of time, in inclement weather, will almost certainly result in a frozen pipe. We also advise against curtains or blinds that run from the window to the floor over the baseboard heater as they can act as a conduit for cold air to drop directly onto the piping increasing the likelihood for a freeze up.

3 – Never turn your thermostat down below 20°C during weather events (outside temperatures colder than -5°C to -7°C). Doing so can allow the thermostat to close the zone valve, completely stopping water flow through the radiator. During cold weather there is enough heat-loss through the windows that it can create a convection air current running down the wall, below the window and over the radiator. Remember, the radiator is designed with fins to efficiently transfer heat from the pipe to the air but it works just as well transferring cold from the air to the pipe. Depending on the circumstances this can cause a zone valve or pipe to freeze up in as little as an hour or two. To check if your heating system is working turn the thermostat above current indoor room temperature and hold your hand close to the top of the baseboard cabinet to detect heat



DRIVING DOWN YOUR MAINTENANCE COSTS!