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## Winter is here New England... Are you prepared? - by Steve Bouzan

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Steve Bouzan,  
ARS Restoration Specialists

For many New Englanders, the winter season means weekend ski trips up north, sledding in the neighborhood, and skating on the Boston Common Frog Pond. However, history has proven that around here, winter also brings damaging snow, ice and freezing rain – all with the potential to significantly impact the condition of your property. The good news is whether you own your own property or are a property manager, there are several practical ways to proactively safeguard your property and minimize damage. I've outlined the Top 10 List below and encourage you to take a closer look before Mother Nature and Jack Frost come knocking again...

1. Property management and maintenance staff should do a routine walk through of all grounds and check all building components. This includes landscaping and equipment such as controllers, timers, sprinkler systems, sidewalks, fencing and outdoor lighting.
2. Proactively also check on recreational equipment like pools, playgrounds, tennis courts and exercise rooms.
3. Add weather stripping around windows or repair any poorly-closing doors to reduce wind gusts and maximize heating efficiency.
4. To prevent water damage, turn off sprinklers and wrap any exposed water pipes with plumbing tape. Shut down and drain water from any spigots. In extreme cold weather, keep the cabinet under the sink in kitchen and bathroom open.
5. Review the maintenance plan for keeping all parking lots, sidewalks and stairs free from ice and snow. Have plenty of calcium chloride/ice melt in stock.
6. Notify all tenants to keep their heat on and not let the unit drop below 55 degrees if they are going to be away from their unit.
7. Follow a proper maintenance schedule for the property's heating and cooling system and have

furnaces, boilers and sump pumps serviced annually. Make sure to change furnace filters and clean the cooling system's coils regularly.

8. Clean gutters to reduce the chance of ice damming and water damage. Use a roof rake to remove snow 3' from edge of roof to prevent ice dams.

9. Clean landscaping equipment and prepare snow removal equipment.

10. Keep plenty of fuel and generators properly stored in the event of a power outage.

While it is nearly impossible to guarantee no damage will occur over the bitter winter months, taking these thoughtful and practical steps will minimize damage and ensure a more enjoyable season!

Steve Bouzan is the technician training specialist at ARS Restoration Specialists, Newton, Mass.