



Prepare for Winter - Batten Down the Hatches!

Year in and year out, some associations seem to be unprepared for what we know will eventually come. Perhaps, lulled into thinking winter will be mild this year, we are still in the glow of autumn's golden colors and milder days. Whatever the reason, now is the time to heed the sage advice of battening down the hatches in anticipation of the season to come.



Winters in the South are generally milder than those in the Northeast or upper Midwest areas. However, this does not mean southern states do not get freezing temperatures, sleet, or snow. Preparation is key to surviving winter, no matter what your region is. Where should your association begin? Perhaps the planning should be divided into two main areas: buildings, infrastructure, and amenities first; and landscaping second.

Plans in place early in the year for the first group will allow ample opportunity for all those affected by these procedures to both understand and implement them. An example would be contracting a vendor to clean the gutters on buildings before a rainy or snowy season, seal window exteriors, and inspect all roof components. If your community is in an area prone to freezing rains and snows, ordering salt treatment earlier in the season may guarantee safer conditions. Amenities need to have a plan as well, especially when access to facilities is interrupted due to expected inclement weather. Safeguarding assets such as tennis court nets and pool chairs should be on the prep list, too.

Landscaping certainly is not immune to the effects of winter. Tree pruning, grass aeration, and debris removal are essential. Trees significantly benefit from selective pruning to remove dead or dying branches, which promotes healthy growth and helps stem disease. It also prevents damage to trees burdened by heavy winds or snowfall. A reputable landscape vendor should provide an overseeding and aeration schedule for the community, which would include seasonal adjustments in irrigation systems, which may need to be winterized as well. Don't forget to draft plans for emergency services in severe weather, from clearing roads of snow to clearing debris from seasonally late storms.

"Be Prepared" is a perfect motto for an association. Saving time and money, as well as reducing stress, certainly are practical reasons for making plans. Ask your Sentry Manager to help your association with these preparations- we are here to serve!

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