

Winter Stuff

What a winter, probably the coldest since we all moved to the Fairways. The sustained cold (8 or 9 degrees) and wind at night caused many problems. Some people had their humidifier water lines freeze and crack, causing water to soak their ceilings. One family had water pouring out their smoke alarms setting them all off. If you have the Fairways 2 you have all your air handling stuff in a small room upstairs that is usually warm and so probably do not have to worry about the line freezing. Also if you have hot water heat or do not have a humidifier you don't have a line to the attic to worry about. The rest of us should take some precaution though. Although this year was unusual there is no guarantee it will not happen again next year or the year after. One degree of temperature change or of wind direction or speed could be enough to cause your line to freeze even though it hasn't happened yet. I put a thermometer in my attic and one night when it was 9 degrees outside, the temperature in the attic was 18 degrees. I shut off my water supply to the humidifier and drained the line. The next day I went out and bought a heat tape, removed the foam insulation from the water line (a 1/4" tubing), taped the heat tape to the line and wrapped it with fiberglass insulation. The heat tape goes on automatically at about 36 degrees and shuts off when the temperature goes higher than that. During the day when the sun is beating down on the roof it can get to 50 degrees even though it is in the teens outside. If you have a Fairways 3, you can have your humidifier moved from the attic to your laundry room for about \$300 ("great peace of mind" says Bob Levine) or use the heat tape on the tubing. The family that had the water coming out of their smoke detectors didn't know how to shut them off after the water shorted them and set them all off. Can you imagine coming home from a cruise, turning on your water so you can clean up and all of a sudden water is coming out of your ceiling and the smoke detectors are screaming away and you can't shut them off? It must have been hell. Smoke detectors can be shut off at the circuit breaker panel and the breaker should be marked, check it.

I put a thermometer in my garage also that night. The temperature went down to 31 degrees. I do not have water in the garage so I wasn't worried. Those with hot water heaters in the garage that

are on should not have to worry either. If you go away though and shut it off altogether you should drain it or at least leave it on the vacation setting. Linda Koretsky has a freezer in her garage and when it got so cold, the freezer stopped working and she had to move and/or give away all the food stored in it. I got two delicious fruit cakes. Linda is going to buy a freezer made to work in the garage. She is not taking anymore chances. There is a refrigerator and refrigerator/freezer made to work in unheated garages, it is made by Whirlpool and the model is Gladiator.

Be very careful if you have alarms that are powered by your telephone. Check with your alarm company but it appears if you turn off your telephone when you go away it also turns off the power to the alarm. The battery is only a back-up and when it runs down, the alarm no longer is operative. It also cannot call in to the alarm company or the others numbers you have programmed if there is no telephone connection.

Outside motion detector lights will help to deter night time break-ins. They should have two floodlight bulbs so you can direct light to two areas. One to light up the general area and one shining on your back or sliding glass door area. Have them installed high so potential burglars cannot tape over the motion sensor or unscrew the bulbs.

Next month by request - Dryers and their vents.

This and previous around the house articles can be retrieved on the web at http://www.umc-1.com/fairways_legend_maintenance_arti.htm

