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# NEWS

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FOR: Home Warranty Association of California (HWAC)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**First-time Buyers Focused In Challenging Economy**  
**HOME WARRANTY ASSOCIATION OFFERS WINTER TIPS THAT SAVE**

VENTURA, CA, Jan. 21, 2010– Emphasizing that first-time buyers in particular are well served to pay special attention to their homes’ operating systems during the winter months, member firms of the Home Warranty Association of California (HWAC) have provided homeowners with energy and cost savings guidelines for “winterizing” residences.

Stating that winterizing initiatives may vary from region to region, HWAC officials emphasized the special attention required by first-time homeowners.

“Homeowners may be unfamiliar with the operating systems of their homes until they have lived there awhile, just as one may be unfamiliar with the features of a new car. As people live in a house, preparing for winter should become a routine that creates a home that provides the necessary comfort without expending extra energy or money,” said Billy Jensen, president of HWAC.

Heading the list of winterizing tips, HWAC suggests that homeowners be certain that their furnace filters are clean. A dirty filter can interfere with the free flow of air, leading to higher fuel costs, overheating and eventual shutdown. HWAC emphasizes that filters are an investment bargain.

Other key winterizing tips offered by HWAC include:

- Make sure registers for central heating are open in all appropriate rooms. The home warranty association also recommends making sure that registers are not blocked by drapes, curtains or furniture to ensure proper heat and air flow to the entire room.
- Set thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting. For each degree the thermostat is lowered and, depending on the climate, a homeowner can save up to 5% on heating bills.
- Install a programmable thermostat to regulate the temperature at night and when you are away from home.
- Insulate water pipes to prevent potential freezing that could result in cutting off the water supply to the home. HWAC suggests purchasing pipe insulation made for this purpose, or even wrapping pipes with an ordinary cloth. An additional advantage is that hot water will flow to the faucet faster, so there also is some savings on water.
- Replace deteriorating weather stripping. Over the years weather stripping loses its capacity to block air, and can be deceptive because it's still in place. New energy

conservation technologies have improved options for weather stripping. Check your local home improvement store for the latest products.

- **Water Heater Settings.** Set your water heater at low to medium. 120 degrees is recommended for most common uses. Many unsuspecting homeowners never check the setting, which may result in higher energy costs with little resulting benefit.

“Winterizing your home can provide substantial cost and energy saving benefits, particularly during a challenging economy. With energy costs continuing to increase, it makes sense to take a few moments to evaluate the simple measures that can make a big difference in both the comfort of your home and your pocketbook,” Jensen said.

HWAC is a statewide organization of home warranty companies representing approximately 95 percent of contracts sold in California.

Typically, a home warranty covers a home’s major operating systems and appliances against breakdowns due to normal wear and usage for one year after the close of sale. Items covered include plumbing, heating and electrical systems, most-built-in appliances, and water heaters. In addition, most HWAC member companies offer additional optional coverage for plan holders for such items as swimming pool equipment, , washer/dryers and refrigerators.

Member firms are 2-10 HBW Warranty of California, Inc., American Home Shield of California, Fidelity National Home Warranty Company, First American Home Buyers, HISCO/CRES Home Warranty Plan, Buyers Protection Group, Inc., and Old Republic Home Protection Co., Inc.

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