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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Protect Your Home By Preparing It for Winter

The Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin offer the following tips for winterizing your home.

MADISON, Wisconsin (October 10, 2006) – “Many homeowners policies will cover winter-related disasters such as burst pipes, ice dams, wind damage and water damage caused by ice or snow,” says Ron Von Haden, CIC, Executive Vice President of the Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin (PIAW). “Review your policy annually with your professional independent agent to ensure that you are covered.”

To prevent damage to your home this winter, the Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin offer the following tips to winterize your home:

- Maintain your gutters: Remove leaves, sticks, and other debris so melting snow and ice can flow freely. When checking the gutters, also make sure the chimney is clear of debris.
- Trim trees and take off any dead branches that may break and cause damage during a winter storm.
- Prevent pipes from bursting by checking the insulation in your attic, basement, and crawl spaces. The attic should be about five to ten degrees warmer than the outside air. Check visible pipes for cracks and leaks and wrap with heating tape for extra protection. Turn

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off water to outside faucets. Keep the temperature in your house at a minimum of 65 degrees. If your pipes do freeze, know where the water shut-off valve is so that you can turn it off quickly in an emergency.

- Service your furnace, boilers, and chimneys at least once a year.
- Get your heating ducts cleaned.
- Check your smoke alarms to make sure they are functioning and change the batteries.
- Consider installing a carbon monoxide detector in your basement.
- If you are going to be gone for an extended period this winter, have someone check on your home on a regular basis. They will be able to identify a potential problem and possibly fix it before any damage occurs. It will also reduce the chance that your home will be broken into.
- Check caulking around doors and windows. Replace caulk that is peeling to prevent cold air from seeping into your home.
- Keep snow and ice from building up around the bottom of the garage door so it closes completely and doesn't warp.

To locate a PIA member near you, look for the PIA logo or go to www.PIAW.org.

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