

Winter Storm Recovery Checklist

As the temperature rises and essential services are restored throughout the region, there are steps you should take now to ensure that your home, your listings, and your clients are protected.

Step One: Protect Yourself & Your Home

Taking steps to protect your family and your home are of highest priority. Follow guidance below to address your basic needs before turning to your clients and community.

- If you are without power: Ensure light switches and lamps are turned off, unnecessary devices are unplugged, and large appliances are not turned on (ex: a stove or oven knob turned on). This will reduce cold load generation and can help protect your home from housefires.
Warming shelters (<https://adrn.org/shelters/>) are set up across Austin and can be a place of relief from the cold you've experienced this week.
- If you are without water: Ensure all indoor and outdoor faucets are fully turned off. Locate the main water valve to your home (it will be outdoors or near your water meter) and ensure it is accessible. You may need a special tool to turn off your water; these can be purchased at a hardware store such as Home Depot or Lowe's. As temperatures begin to rise, listen and look for leaks and be vigilant about checking around your house. As water pressure ramps up, pipes that were once frozen will thaw and may start leaking.
- If your home or business needs repair: Visit <http://austintexas.gov/page/emergency-repairs> to learn more about how to handle emergency repairs and the permitting options available in the city of Austin. Be sure to take pictures of any damages in case you need to file an insurance claim.

Step Two: Protect Vacant Properties

If you can safely travel, check on any vacant listings or properties you manage at your earliest availability to prevent burst pipes or house fires as services are restored. You will want to:

- 1) Shut off the main water valve to the property until you are sure there are no leaks.
- 2) Fully drain all indoor faucets, outdoor faucets and hose bibs, and water lines; and consider having a licensed plumber inspect the property for any needed repairs.
- 3) Ensure all light switches and appliances are turned off and/or unplugged.
- 4) Walk around the exterior and look for signs of leaks.
- 5) Check your attic spaces for accumulated snow or water damage.
- 6) Look inside cabinets for any water leaks or damage.
- 7) Check the heater and set it to a reasonable temperature.

Step Three: Check on Your Clients

If you have not already, contact your clients and ensure that they are somewhere safe and that their essential needs are being met. In addition, talk to your broker about any specific policies or next steps regarding your listings and/or ongoing transactions.

- If you have an active contract in place, check clauses related to casualty loss in your contract and talk to your broker about resolutions for under-contract listings and closing timelines that may have been impacted by the winter storms.
- If you are a listing agent, advise your clients to call their homeowner's insurance provider to determine specific policies regarding weather-related damage, including the ability for non-policy holders to accept claim settlement payments. Be sure your clients take pictures of any weather-related damage to file a claim if needed.
- If you are a buyer's agent, advise your clients to contact their lender to determine if any additional inspections may be required on a property.