

Checklist

OPENING THE CABIN FOR THE SEASON



BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

- Restore utilities (electricity, gas, internet, phone, etc.) by calling a week in advance.
- Verify your property and watercraft insurance is current.
- Check boat registration.
- Pack cleaning supplies: batteries, a first aid kit, rodent inspection gear (rubber gloves, an N-100 respirator mask, bleach, and trash bags).

UPON ARRIVAL: EXTERIOR

- Walk the full perimeter and watch for frost heave along the foundation, inspect siding for holes from pests, and gaps around the windows, door frames, and roof.
- Watch for frost heave along the foundation.
- Inspect siding for holes from pests.
- Check for gaps around windows and door frames.
- Check all four sides of the roof from the ground for lifted shingles around eaves.
- Examine the chimney for missing caps, damaged flashing, and cracked mortar joints.
- Clear gutters and confirm downspouts are directing water away from the foundation.
- Take note of any damaged trees that have the potential to fall and cause damage.

WATER SYSTEM STARTUP

- Inspect the wellhead for a tight cap, intact vent screens, and no rodent damage at the control box.
- Check the pressure tank's air charge using a tire gauge at the Schrader valve before turning on any power- if water squirts from the valve, the bladder is ruptured, and the tank needs replacement. If no water squirts from the valve, proceed with the checklist.
- Turn on the pump breaker, pressurize the system, then open an outdoor faucet first and run it until the water runs clear (~10-20 minutes).
- Work through each fixture in the cabin, one at a time, flushing each for at least 5 minutes.
- Listen for the pump to cycle on and off with all taps closed— if it does, this means there is a leak somewhere.
- For the water heater, make sure the tank is filled before turning on the power. Confirm the tank is full by running a hot tap until water flows steadily before switching the breaker on.

PEST AND WILDLIFE INSPECTION

- Before you clean any areas showing rodent activity, open all windows and doors and leave the area for at least 30 minutes.
- Spray all droppings and nesting material with a ratio of 10:1 water-to-bleach solution. Let it soak for 5 minutes, wipe up with paper towels, and double-bag for disposal. Never sweep or vacuum rodent droppings— this can potentially aerosolize viruses.
- Seal any holes larger than a dime with steel wool and caulk.
- Set snap traps.
- Check the attic for bat guano.
- Inspect eaves, deck undersides, window frames, and shutters for wasp and hornet nests before working around them.
- Look for carpenter ant frass in unpainted wood.
- Check dryer vents, range vent hoods, and chimneys for bird nests, as these can pose a fire hazard.

DOCK AND WATERCRAFT

- Inspect the dock for ice damage before installing.
- Inspect if the lake bed has shifted, as this alters where the footings need to sit.
- Ensure state permit requirements and local zoning requirements are met if necessary.
- Inspect watercraft hull, motor, and trailer for winter storage damage.
- Check all hose clamps.
- Check the propeller.
- Inspect batteries.
- Check the fire extinguisher.
- Check navigation lights.
- Check PFDs.
- Install the drain plug.

WATERFRONT AND SHORELINE

- Wade or carefully submerge the swimming area for submerged hazards (glass, metal, sharp rocks, and branches).
- Walk the shoreline and watch for bank erosion, undercut edges, and any seawall or riprap displacement from ice shoves.
- Check the swim raft, ladder, and any anchored waterfront equipment for winter damage.
- Remember to clean, drain, dry, and dispose of to keep our lakes clean and prevent the transfer of invasive species.

RESTOCKING LIST (COMMON ITEMS)

- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Aloe
- Fire starting supplies
- Kindling
- Firewood
- Fresh batteries for flashlights and lanterns
- Trash bags
- Paper towels
- Cleaning supplies
- Propane for the grill
- Boat fuel
- Fishing license
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