FREE GUIDE FOR SECOND-HOME OWNERS

CABIN OWNER'S WINTER OUTAGE & FREEZE GUIDE

Mountain storms can knock the power out for hours or days. In an empty cabin, no power means no heat, and that is when pipes freeze. This is a plain-language checklist. It is general information, not plumbing or electrical advice. For anything in your walls, call a licensed plumber or electrician.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE CABIN FOR A FEW DAYS

- [ ] Decide: **drain the house** or **keep it heated**. Draining is safer if you will be gone more than a day or two in freezing weather.
- [ ] If draining (steps from a mountain water district's published tips): turn the electric water heater **off at the breaker**; **close the main water valve**; open the outside drains and the water-heater drain; open every faucet so the pipes drain fully; put a little non-toxic RV/plumbing antifreeze in each drain trap, toilet bowl and tank, and washing-machine trap.
- [ ] If keeping it heated: set the thermostat well above freezing and still shut the main water off if you will be away 24 hours or more. Heat only works while the power is on.
- [ ] Do not count on "drip the faucet." The district source says leaving taps slightly open **does not work** and wastes water.
- [ ] Never leave an electric water-heater element on in an empty tank. It burns out quickly.
- [ ] Leave flashlights, fresh batteries and a battery radio where you can find them. Skip candles (fire risk).
- [ ] Park only in legal spots and keep tire chains in the car.

FRIDGE AND FREEZER IF THE POWER GOES OUT

- Keep the doors shut. An unopened fridge stays cold for several hours.
- Perishables should not sit above **40°F for more than 2 hours**. After 2 hours, move dairy, meat, fish, eggs and leftovers into a cooler with ice.
- If you were away: use a thermometer. Throw out anything above 40°F. Freezers that are fairly full are usually fine if power returns within 24 hours. After more than 24 hours without power, it is safest to throw out perishables.
- Never taste food to decide if it is safe.

GENERATORS, HEATERS AND CHIMNEYS

- **Never run a generator indoors**, in a garage or in any closed space. Keep it outdoors, well away from windows, doors and vents.
- Do not use outdoor heating or cooking equipment inside. It makes dangerous fumes.
- Using a fireplace or wood stove? Have the chimney swept and the spark screen checked. Sparks escaping in dry, windy weather can start a fire.
- Downed power line: stay at least 100 feet away and call 911.

WHAT A PINE AND SHINE CABIN CHECK CAN AND CANNOT DO

WHEN YOU ARE NOT THERE

A cabin check is a visual walk-through with photos sent the same day. It is not a plumbing, electrical or repair service.

I can	I do not
Walk the outside, look for fallen branches, snow loads and pine-needle buildup	Drain, winterize or repair plumbing
Look inside for drips, a cold house, or a tripped breaker you point me to	Work inside electrical panels
Check doors, windows and gates are locked, then send photos	Enter without your written OK
Clear walkways, steps and decks (snow clearing is its own price)	Make promises about insurance or fire inspections
Tell you what I see so you can call the right pro	Take on anything over $1,000

QUICK STORM-WEEK ROUTINE

1. **3 days before:** check the forecast and Caltrans road conditions; tell me if you want a check before the storm.
2. **Day before:** clear gutters and decks of needles if you can, put firewood away from the house, move vehicles to legal parking.
3. **During:** stay off the roads when chains are required. If the cabin loses heat while you are away, shut off the main water as soon as someone can safely get there.
4. **After:** text me and I will look and send photos.

> **Prices (cabin checks):** single check $55 (or $35 added to another paid visit the same day) · extra visit $65 · Cabin Watch from $129/month. Snow clearing for walkways, steps and decks $125. Winter Ready Bundle $199 (check + snow clearing + half-cord of your firewood stacked).

Call or text (760) 567-8431 · pineandshine.ca@gmail.com

SOURCES

Southern California Edison, “Outage Tips” (sce.com/outages-safety/outage-preparedness/outage-tips), read Nov 28, 2026. Sierra Cedars Community Services District (Shaver Lake area), “Tips” (sierracedars.com/tips), read Nov 28, 2026: example of one mountain district’s drain-down steps; ask your own water district what it recommends. FDA, “Power Outages: Key Tips for Consumers About Food Safety.” Pine and Shine is not a licensed contractor and gives no plumbing or electrical advice.