Heading Home for the Holidays?  
Simple steps to protect your chapter house in your absence

Finals are coming to an end, and it is time to go home for the holidays! Before you leave, be sure to prepare the chapter house for the extended break. The house needs to be protected against cold weather. In addition, the absence of brothers increases the threat of vandalism or theft.

The following list will help ensure that the chapter house is prepared to weather the storm:

**INTERIOR**

- Thoroughly clean the chapter house and remove all perishable foods.
- Inspect each room and unplug non-essential appliances and electronics.
- Store chapter and personal property in a secured area.
- Confirm that heat registers are not blocked and that combustible materials are safely stored (not next to or in the same room as the furnace or boiler).
- Set the thermostat at no less than 60ºF/16ºC and leave the furnace on.
- Leave indoor faucets slightly open to allow for a trickle of water--this may protect piping that is exposed or cannot be properly insulated.
- Leave open the doors to cabinets that contain water lines as this will allow heat to enter the area.
- Utilize the assistance of a qualified heating service company to inspect the furnace, hot water heater, exposed water lines and drain pipes for slow leaks.

**EXTERIOR**

- Remove (and store) all hoses from exterior spigots and faucets.
- Inspect all gutters and drains for debris, which might interfere with runoff and proper drainage.
- Attach and secure downspouts with an extension away from the foundation in order to prevent water damage. Additionally, ensure that the water is not draining into the driveway, sidewalks or patios.
- Lock all windows and doors.

HVAC contractor: ________________________________
Date completed: ________________________________

- Repair any broken exterior doors or windows, which cause heat loss. Make sure they are properly insulated and that they close and latch completely.
- If a fireplace has been used, be sure to clean out the coals and close the flue. If it has not already been done, have the fireplace and chimney serviced and cleaned.
IN YOUR ABSENCE

- Contact your chapter advisor, house corporation officer or a reliable caretaker to make a twice-weekly inspection of the chapter house during the holidays.
- During each visit, the chapter house should be inspected to confirm no loss has occurred, that the furnace is operating and that the premise is secure and all walkways are clear of snow, ice and debris.
- Arrange for the pick-up of any mail that may be delivered to the chapter house, or contact your local post office to place mail delivery on hold.
- Contact the newspaper and stop delivery while you are away.
- Alert university or city police to the vacancy of the chapter house. Ask that they make regular patrols and checks of the property to prevent vandalism or theft.

These items are a good start as you lock up the house for the holiday season. However, there may be other necessary steps to ensure the safety of the chapter house. Contact your house corporation or university physical plant officials to assist you.