

Before the Cold Hits

Frozen pipes aren't just an inconvenience. An average of a quarter-million families have their homes ruined and their lives disrupted each winter ... all because of water pipes that freeze and burst.

And if you think recovering from frozen pipes is as simple as calling a plumber, think again.

An 1/8" crack in a pipe can spew up to 250 gallons of water a day, wrecking floors, furniture and keepsakes. Both plastic (PVC) and copper pipes may burst.

Imagine if your pipes were to freeze and break while you were away on vacation: Your homecoming would be a soggy one and your fix-it plea to a plumber would have to be accompanied by calls to a contractor, carpet-layer, painter and furniture store. Damage might be so severe that you and your family would have to move out of your home while repairs are made.

By taking a few simple precautions, you can save yourself the mess, money and aggravation frozen pipes cause. Here are a few simple steps to protect your home or apartment:



INSULATE

Insulate pipes in your home's crawl spaces and attic. These exposed pipes are most susceptible to freezing. Remember: the more insulation you use, the better protected your pipes will be.



HEAT TAPE

Heat tape or thermostatically controlled heat cables can be used to wrap pipes. Be sure to use products approved by an independent testing organization, such as Underwriters Laboratories Inc., and only for the use intended (exterior or interior). Closely follow all manufacturers' installation and operation instructions.



SEAL

Seal leaks that allow cold air inside, near where pipes are located. Look for air leaks around electrical wiring, windows, dryer vents and pipes. Use caulk or insulation to keep the cold out and the heat in. With severe wind chill, a tiny opening can let in enough cold air to cause a pipe to freeze.



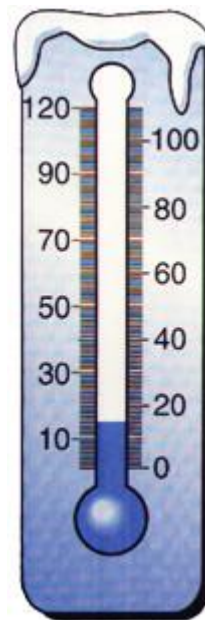
DISCONNECT

Disconnect garden hoses and, if practical, use an indoor valve to shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house

When the Mercury Drops

A TRICKLE of hot and cold water might be all it takes to keep your pipes from freezing. Let warm water drip overnight, preferably from a faucet on an outside wall. Remember this water will be going through your meter.

OPEN cabinet doors to allow heat to get to un-insulated pipes under sinks and appliances near exterior walls.



If You're Away

SET the thermostat in your house no lower than 55 degrees.

ASK a friend or neighbor to check your house daily to make sure it's warm enough to prevent freezing.

SHUT OFF and drain the water system. Be aware that if you have a fire protection sprinkler system in your house or business, it will be deactivated when you shut off the water.

If Your Pipes Freeze

DON'T TAKE CHANCES. If you turn on your faucets and nothing comes out, leave the faucets turned on and call a plumber. If you detect that your water pipes have frozen and burst, turn off the water at the main shut-off valve in the house.

Make sure everyone in your family knows where the water shut-off valve is and how to open and close it.

NEVER try to thaw a pipe with a torch or other open flame. Water damage is preferable to burning down your house.

DO NOT use electrical appliances in areas of standing water because you could be electrocuted.