



Regional Housing Authority



Water in Pipes has a unique property in that it expands as it freezes. This expansion puts tremendous pressure on whatever is containing it, including copper or plastic pipes. No matter the strength of a container or pipe, expanding water can cause pipes to burst and cause expensive repair.

Tips on how to prevent frozen pipes

- ✓ Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- ✓ Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.
- ✓ When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold-water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- ✓ Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
- ✓ If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55° F.
- ✓ If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.

Tips on how to protect pipes from freezing

- ✓ Remove and drain garden hoses and store hoses indoors. Shut off inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs. Open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain out. Keep the outside valve open during the winter months so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand without causing the pipe to break from expansion.
- ✓ Add insulation to attics, basements and crawl spaces. Insulation will maintain higher temperatures in these areas.
- ✓ Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located in unheated areas. Look in the garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold-water pipes in these areas should be insulated.
- ✓ Consider insulating your water pipes with "foam pipe sleeves" or installing UL-listed heat tape, or heat cable on exposed water pipes. Newspaper can provide some degree of insulation and protection to exposed pipes – even ¼" of newspaper can provide significant protection in areas that usually do not have frequent or prolonged temperatures below freezing.

Tips on how to thaw out frozen pipes.

- ✓ Keep the faucet open, as you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt using a heat source. Water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe. You should always begin the thawing process near the faucet, then work your way down to the frozen blockage.
- ✓ Apply a heat source to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, hot towels, a portable electric space heater (kept away from flammable materials).
- ✓ Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others possibly may freeze too.
- ✓ Apply heat until full water pressure is restored in faucet. If you are unable to locate the frozen area or the frozen area is not accessible, or if you cannot thaw the frozen pipe, or do not feel comfortable thawing a pipe yourself or if a pipe bursts with water, you should contact a plumber or other professional as soon as possible. They will be able to determine the location and repair the frozen pipe or pipes for you.
- ✓ **Never attempt to thaw frozen pipes using an open flame.**