

Tips to Keep Pipes From Freezing or Bursting

- Assure that basement temperature is above freezing.
- Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas.
- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Utilize heat tape on pipes in crawl spaces and other unheated areas.
- Seal off access doors, air vents and racks.
- Open cabinets and closets that contain water lines to allow circulation of warm air. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.
- Locate master shutoff valve so water can quickly be turned off if a leak occurs.
- 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.
- Check empty and vacant buildings to be sure heat is maintained no lower than 55 °F. If out of town, have a neighbor or relative periodically stop by. A great deal of frost or condensation on windows may indicate that a heating system has failed and water may be running due to frozen or broken pipes.

Heat should be applied to a section of frozen pipe using a hair dryer or by wrapping an electric heating pad around it. Thawing should not be attempted with a torch, kerosene or propane heater or open flame.

To Thaw Frozen Pipes

- 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.
- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable space heater (kept away from flammable materials), or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device.
- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area if the frozen area is not accessible, or if you cannot thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.
- Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, other may freeze too.