

Water Pipe Preparation and Prevention for Winter Freeze Potential

Tips:

Know where the shut-off valve is for your home.

Outside of your home

- Remove and store garden hoses
- Wrap or cover outside faucets
- Wrap pipes in crawl spaces, under porches, garages and any pipes which have frozen in the past. To wrap pipes, you may use either dry newspapers or bags covered with plastic secured with string or wire, or commercially manufactured coverings available at hardware and plumbing stores
- Drain irrigation or water systems
- It is recommended that customers put visible sticks or markers next to the water meter box so that the water department can shut your water off if necessary.

Inside your home

- Keep the temperature at a 55° minimum (day and night)
- Keep the cabinet doors open (under sink, exterior walls) to allow warm air in
- Insulate pipes that lie against exterior walls or use heat tape
- Keep garage door closed

What if I am not going to be home for a long period of time during the winter?

If the home is vacant and unheated during the winter, turn off the main shut-off valve in the building as well as the hot water heater. After water is shut-off, open all inside faucets to drain then close. Shut off the valve to each toilet and flush once to drain the tank.

What do I do if I have water in part of my house, but not the whole house?

Call the water department if the whole house is without water, if it is just a section of the house call a plumber. Homeowners are responsible for all pipes beyond the meter.

What do I do if I have frozen pipes in my home?

- Thaw as soon as possible to prevent further damage. Thawing can be done by using a hair dryer, a light bulb near the pipe, wrap the pipe with a hot water cloth, use an electric space heater to heat the area or heat tape
- **Never use an open flame**
- Call a plumber or capable handyman to thaw pipe or to replace broken pipes

I have an electric water heater. What do I do if I lose power to my house during the winter?

If you lose electricity and have an electric water heater, be aware of and take action to avoid the possibility of frozen pipes. You could either let the hot and cold water run slightly from each faucet or shut off the main shut-off valve in the building and drain each faucet. Even if you run a small amount of water from each faucet it will likely cost much less than a break and repair.