



Protect Your Pipes in Winter Weather

Pipes that freeze most frequently are:

- Pipes that are exposed to severe cold, like outdoor hose bibs, swimming pool supply lines, water sprinkler lines, and backflow preventers.
- Water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets.
- Pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation.

How to prevent frozen pipes:

- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Close vents to crawl spaces to protect pipes and cover outdoor spigots,
- 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.
- 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.
- Insulate backflow preventers and provide a heater, if necessary.

How to safely thaw a frozen pipe:

- 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, others may freeze, too.

Locate your water shut off valve:

- The ability to quickly close this valve may prevent further damage to your home in the event one of your interior pipes burst.
- The shut-off valve may be in the basement, under the kitchen sink, in a utility closet, near the hot water heater, or even under your home in a crawl space.
- If you think you have found it, be sure to test it.
- If you cannot locate your inside shut-off valve or do not have one installed, we recommend that you contact your plumber.