



WINTER TIPS

Winter weather brings icy winds and dipping temperatures which can do a lot of damage to your home by freezing pipes and leaving you without flowing water. There are many precautions you can take now to help you avoid the expense and inconvenience of frozen pipes during an extended cold spell.

Before Freezing Weather

1. **Disconnect and drain hoses from outside faucets.** If your home has a separate shut-off valve for outside faucets (usually located in the basement or crawl space) then use it to shut the water off to your outside faucets. Then go outside and turn on the faucets to drain water from the line. If your home does not have a separate shut-off valve for outside faucets, then wrap each outside faucet with insulation or newspaper.
2. **Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas** such as the garage, crawl space, or attic. Check with your local home improvement store for which materials to use to insulate your pipes.
3. **Show household members how to turn off water to the house in case of emergencies.** The main shut-off valve is often located near the water heater or the washing machine. If a pipe bursts anywhere in the house – kitchen, bath, basement, or crawl space – *this valve turns it off.*
4. **Turn off and drain irrigation systems and backflow devices.** Wrap backflow devices with insulating material.
5. **Cover foundation vents with foam blocks,** thickly folded newspaper, or cardboard.

During Freezing Weather

1. **Leave the heat on at least 55 degrees and open cupboard doors under sinks,** especially where plumbing is in outside walls, to let interior heat warm the pipes.
2. **Temporarily, keep a steady drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter.** This keeps water moving, making it less likely to freeze.
3. **If you are away for any length of time, you may consider shutting off your home's water** to reduce the chances of frozen or broken pipes. Contact your water provider for more information on how to do this.
4. **Have your plumber and water provider's telephone number handy.** During an extended cold spell, your pipes might freeze despite the best precautions.

If Your Pipes Freeze

1. Determine which pipe(s) are frozen. If some faucets work but others don't, that means pipes inside your home are likely frozen. If none of your faucets work, there may be a problem at the street - **contact your water provider.**
2. **Find the frozen pipe(s) and attempt to thaw them with a hair dryer using a low setting.** Wave the hair dryer back and forth along the frozen area. NEVER thaw a frozen pipe with an open flame.
3. **Shut off water and power (or gas) to the water heater if you have a leak or a broken pipe.** Contact your water provider if you are unable to find the shut-off valve or the valve doesn't work. Check with a plumber or home improvement store for leak repair supplies and information.



Comprised of more than 20 member organizations, the Consortium serves Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties and is committed to developing and implementing water conservation programs that educate the public about water-related issues.

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