

Tips to help safely prevent frozen pipes



If the outside temperature approaches freezing, exposure to subzero air presents the greatest risk of pipe freezing. If you have lost power below are prevention tips to help safely prevent frozen pipes:

- Turn off or unplug electrical appliances and lights to prevent a circuit overload when power is restored.
- If you use a fuel space heater or generator, be aware of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure the space heater is used with proper ventilation.
- Never run a generator inside. Set the generator up outside and down wind from the living area.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to help reduce food spoilage.

If your home will remain unoccupied:

- Shut off the water supply and drain the water supply system.
- Consider draining the water heater and boiler.

If you intend to occupy your home:

- Water pipes located adjacent to exterior walls or within base-cabinets or in closets are susceptible to freezing. Leave the cabinet/closet doors open to allow air circulation around those pipes.
- Let all faucets drip to prevent freezing of the water inside the pipe and if freezing does occur, to relieve pressure buildup in the pipes between the ice blockage and the faucet. The pressure buildup is the actual cause of bursting pipes.
- Cracks or holes in outside walls should be sealed or otherwise blocked.
- Exposed pipes, especially those on outside walls should be wrapped and insulated in some manner. If building insulation is unavailable, consider other materials.
- If your house has a crawl space located under it, close all of the air vents located on the foundation wall. This will help protect the pipes located in that area.
- Detach all hoses and shut off the water supply to outside faucets.

Source: Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, 2012; New York State Emergency Management Office, 2012; Western Virginia Water Authority, 2012.

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