

## *What You Should Know*

# PREVENT FREEZING PIPES

Frozen water in pipes can cause water pressure buildup between the ice blockage and the closed faucet at the end of a pipe. This may lead to pipes bursting at their weakest point. Pipes in attics, crawl spaces, and outside walls are particularly vulnerable to freezing in extremely cold weather. The following precautions may help prevent freezing pipes this winter.

## DID YOU KNOW?



- ✓ A 1/8-inch crack can leak 250 gallons of water per day.
- ✓ Plastic (PVC) pipes as well as copper pipes can burst.
- ✓ Frozen water expands by 20% of its original volume.

## PREVENTION TIPS

- Fit exposed pipes with insulation sleeves or wrapping to slow the heat transfer. The more insulation the better.
- Seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations near water pipes with caulking.
- Keep the thermostat set to a minimum of 55 degrees during winter months to help prevent pipes from freezing.
- Drain and store outdoor hoses. Close inside valves that supply the outdoor hose bibs and open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain. Leave outside valves open so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand without causing the pipe to burst.
- Drain water from swimming pools and water sprinkler lines before the cold weather hits.

## COLDER DAYS

- Allow a very slight trickle of warm water to drip from the faucets to help keep your pipes from freezing.
- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to get to uninsulated pipes under sinks and appliances near exterior walls.

## PREVENT FREEZING PIPES

### IF THEY FREEZE

#### THAWING FROZEN PIPES

- Shut off the building's main water supply.
- If indoors, get towels and buckets to catch the water as it melts.
- Locate and open the faucet that is connected to the frozen pipe to allow the pipe to drain.
- For metal pipes, wrap rags or towels around the frozen pipe and pour boiling water over the rags. Start close to the faucet and work back to the part that is frozen.
- A hairdryer may also be used to melt the ice. Again, start close to the faucet and work back towards the frozen area. Do not stand in water or have wet hands when using electric appliances.
- Heat lamps are good for thawing pipes that are inside walls or floors in the building. Direct the lamp at the frozen area of the pipe. Leave a foot of space between the lamp and the wall, pipe, or floor.

#### WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do NOT attempt to thaw a frozen pipe using a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or any other open flame device. This is a serious fire and carbon monoxide hazard.
- Do NOT let water come in contact with electricity while attempting to thaw pipes using any type of electrical device.
- Do NOT leave pipes unattended while trying to thaw them using an electric appliance.
- Do NOT pour antifreeze in your water lines unless directed by a professional. Antifreeze is environmentally harmful, and is dangerous to humans, pets, wildlife, and landscaping.
- Do NOT take chances. If you feel like the situation is out of control, contact a plumber immediately.



#### LINKS OF INTEREST

[www.prepare.org](http://www.prepare.org) A division of the Red Cross dedicated to serving the vulnerable population including seniors, children and people with disabilities by providing relevant information regarding disaster preparedness.

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) The American Red Cross website.