



Checklist: Protecting Your Home Against Frozen Pipes

Actions to take before freezing weather sets in

- ❑ Remove, drain and store outdoor hoses.
- ❑ Drain water from swimming pools, spas and water sprinkler lines following the manufacturer's directions. Do not put antifreeze in these lines unless directed.
- ❑ Seal leaks that are surrounding or are near pipes.
- ❑ Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located and are in unheated areas. Look in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated. A hot water supply line can freeze just as a cold water one can if the water is not running through the pipe and the water temperature in the pipe is cold.
- ❑ Consider installing products made to insulate water pipes like a pipe sleeve, UL listed heat tape, heat cable or similar materials. Many of these products are available at your local hardware store. Pipes should be carefully wrapped, with ends and joints tightly wrapped with tape.

What to do during cold weather

- ❑ If there are water lines in the garage, keep garage doors closed.
- ❑ Open kitchen cupboard and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing.
- ❑ Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By doing so, you will prevent a costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
- ❑ When temperatures are extremely cold, let cold water drip from the faucet that has exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe helps prevent it from freezing because the temperature of the water is above freezing.
- ❑ It also is recommended to turn on both hot and cold faucets near outside walls to allow a small trickle of water to run during the night and, if not used often, during extremely cold days as well.
- ❑ If you will be away from your home for an extended period of time during cold weather, leave the heat on and set no lower than 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Also, drain your water system before you leave and ask someone to check your house daily.



Actions to take if pipes freeze

- ❑ If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect that the pipe is frozen. Locate the suspected frozen area of the pipe.
- ❑ Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and it begins to melt, water will begin flowing through the frozen area. Running water will help melt more ice in the pipe.
- ❑ Apply heat to the frozen section of the pipe using an electric heating pad, hair dryer or portable space heater. You also can wrap pipes in towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, propane heater or other open flame device. Such devices can make water in a frozen pipe boil and cause it to explode.
- ❑ 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 other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. Typically, if one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too.

What to do if pipes burst

- ❑ Shut off water immediately to prevent additional damage.
- ❑ Take proper precautions to avoid an electrical shock from being in or near standing water.
- ❑ Call your plumber.
- ❑ Take an inventory of any damaged property or possessions.

Source: American Red Cross