

## Prevent Freezing Pipes in Extreme Cold



It's that time of year again: cold snap season. Plumbing systems can freeze when temperatures take a sudden nosedive past the freezing mark, or 32 F. And when water freezes and expands within a pipe, the pipe can burst.

Here are some tips to protect your plumbing during extreme cold:

**Turn one faucet to a slow drip.** When outdoor temperatures drop below 10 F, you might want to keep one of your indoor water faucets on a slow, continuous drip. Use cold water. Choose the faucet furthest from your incoming water line. The stream should be about the thickness of a thin pencil. The constant water flow reduces the chance that water will stagnate and freeze inside your pipes. When the temperatures rise, turn off the faucet. This strategy might cost a bit extra, but it could save you from burst pipes and water damage.

**Insulate exposed pipes.** Pipe insulation provides an extra layer of protection during frigid temperatures. Use foam tubing or pipe-insulating tape. Even bubble wrap or multiple layers of newspaper can work in a pinch. Remember to keep insulation materials away from open flames, like pilot lights.

**Seal off drafts.** Search your basement, attic, crawl space and other unfinished areas for drafts. Seal off openings to shield your pipes from frigid air and help prevent freezing.

**Drain outdoor faucets.** Shut off the water supply to outdoor faucets, then turn them on to drain any remaining water. When the tap runs dry, turn it off. And disconnect all hoses. This process eliminates leftover water that could freeze your pipes.

**Maintain a stable indoor temperature.** Keep your property heated to at least 55 F to protect your pipes. Circulate the heat to your basement, too.

**Open cabinet doors.** Open cabinet doors to sinks located next to exterior walls. This allows the warm interior air to circulate to the pipes under the cabinets.

**Locate your emergency shut-off valves.** Find out where your main water shut-off valve is and how to use it. This is critical information if a pipe bursts.

If a pipe bursts suddenly due to unforeseen circumstances, like a freeze, your insurance usually covers it. However, the insurance company might question your coverage if they determine the damage was due to neglect, like failing to maintain adequate temperatures or insulation.

Remember these pipe protection tips when the subzero temperatures hit. Be safe and stay warm out there!

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