

Freezing Temperatures and Frozen Pipes

When temperatures dip below freezing, exposed water pipes and fixtures are at risk of freezing. Depending on the type of pipes you have, the expansion that occurs when water freezes can cause pipes to break.

Tips to Protect Plumbing

Disconnect

Disconnect hoses from outdoor spigots. It's also a good idea to insulate the spigot with a cover.

Insulate

Insulate exposed pipes and backflow preventers. Wrap them with towels or blankets, or buy foam pipe insulation at a hardware store. Wrap backflow preventers in plastic or buy a cover.

Leave Faucet Dripping

If you are home, let an indoor faucet drip overnight. This is ideal for older homes with a crawl space and uninsulated pipes. Flowing water is less likely to freeze. If you have a two-story home, let a faucet on the first floor drip. Make sure the drain isn't blocked and remember to turn off the water in the morning.

Locate Shut-Off Valve

Know where your home's water shut-off valve is and how to use it. For most single-family homes, it's located in the ground near your outdoor spigot, in line with your water meter. It's important to keep the shut-off valve clear of overgrowth and easy to access. In the event of a pipe break or other water leak in your home, you can use this valve to turn off the water supply, which will prevent water damage.

Discovering Frozen Pipes

During extremely cold weather, if you have little to no water flow when you turn on the faucet, your pipes may be frozen. Frozen pipes will thaw as daytime temperatures rise, but keep the following in mind:

- If you are going to be at home, open a faucet and wait until water begins flowing again. Listen for leaks, water expands when it freezes, which can cause leaks in pipes. If you discover a leak, turn off the water supply to your home at the main shut-off valve and contact a plumber.
- If you are planning to leave your home, turn off your water supply at the main shut-off valve. This will prevent water damage from potential leaks in your plumbing. If you have a leak, contact a plumber.