

Winterizing Tips - Protect your Water Pipes from Freezing

Your water pipes and meter may freeze if they are not protected from extreme cold. If they should freeze, the costs for pipe and meter repair, and any water damage caused when pipes thaw is the homeowner's responsibility.

The following tips can help you safeguard your pipes and water meter from freeze ups:

- **Locate your shutoff valve** and be sure it is working properly in case of an emergency.
- **Protect outside pipes and faucets.** If you have a separate shutoff valve for the outside faucet, turn it off and drain the lines. If not, wrap and insulate outside faucets or hose bibs.
- **Check for broken windows or damaged skirting** that might cause freezing to your pipes or meter in your basement or crawl space.
- **Caulk around pipes** where they enter the house. Seal cracks or holes in windows, walls or doors near the meter or pipes.
- **Make sure room heat can circulate freely** around the meter and water pipes.
- **Leave cabinet doors open where there is plumbing** when the temperature is below freezing to allow more heat to the pipes.
- **Wrap interior pipes with insulation**, particularly in unheated areas like the garage, basement or crawl space.
- **If you have had problems in the past** with your pipes freezing, you may want to let the water run at a slow rate in extreme cold. The extra cost in your water bill will be minimal compared to the cost of repairing a broken pipe.



If your pipes freeze, follow these steps:

Thaw the lines safely. Use hair dryers, heat lamps or electric lamps. Thawing won't be fast, but it will be safe. Do not leave the pipes unattended. Don't use an open flame or an electric arc welder to thaw frozen water lines.

When plumbing pipes are frozen, there is often water available at one faucet but not another. If there is no water at all, the problem could be in the street, and Maine Water might be able to help. Frozen or leaking water meters will need to be checked by Maine Water personnel.

If your pipes burst, shut off your water and the water heater. If you are unable to find the shutoff valve, or have water leaking in the house, Maine Water can help you shut off the water. If you have a broken pipe, you might want to call a plumber for the repair, but you will need to contact Maine Water to replace the water meter.

For problems with frozen pipes, call our 24-hour emergency number 1-800-287-1643 for assistance.