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The Big Chill Checklist

How to Prevent Frozen Pipes



Check Your Pipes

Are you ready for the big chill? Winters can be harsh on household plumbing and rough on your wallet if household plumbing is damaged. Now is the time to protect the water meter and pipes from freezing temperatures. Follow these tips to help reduce your risk of costly repairs.

Equipment Responsibilities

Homeowners are responsible for protecting the water meter and pipes inside their property line from damage caused by frost, hot water and external causes. You may be charged for damages to the water meter if this occurs.

Start Outside

Begin outdoors by disconnecting and draining the garden hose connection. Next, close all outside vents, crawl spaces and doors so cold air doesn't seep inside. Fix broken windows and seal cracks in the walls.

Insulate, Insulate, Insulate

It's a good idea to wrap the meter and water lines in commercial insulation. Pipes subject to cold or freezing should be wrapped in heat tape, which is available at hardware stores.

Locate the Shutoff Valves

Make sure the valves on either side of the water meter are working properly. Place a tag on the main shutoff valve and make sure everyone in the house knows its location and how to operate it during an emergency.

Check the Heat

If you're going away for an extended period of time, keep a minimum amount of heat on in the house. This will help protect the pipes in case the temperature drops. If you plan to turn the heat off, drain all the water from the pipes, toilets and water heater, and turn off the power source to the water heater.

More Tips for Cold Weather

Check the meter periodically to see if there is damage and don't hesitate to contact us if you detect a crack. If you have had problems with frozen pipes in the past, you may want to keep a trickle of water running from the highest faucet in your house. You will be billed for the water used, but this procedure may help prevent more costly plumbing repairs that result from broken pipes.

THAWING FROZEN PIPES

Act Quickly

If your pipes freeze, it's important to clear blockages as soon as possible to minimize damage. In some instances, it may be best to call a licensed plumber.

Turn Off the Water

If a water pipe has frozen and burst, turn off the water at the main shutoff valve in the house. Open a nearby faucet slightly so the pipe can drain as it thaws.

Be Careful

Do not use electrical appliances in areas of standing water. Never use hot water or a blowtorch on a frozen pipe or water meter.
