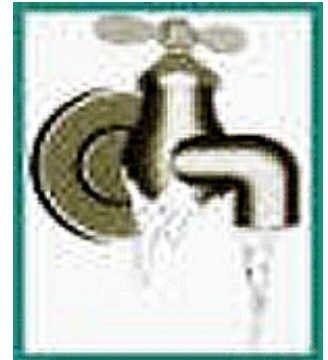


Preventing the Disaster of Frozen Pipes

Every winter, frozen water pipes catch thousands of homeowners by surprise. If not corrected right away, a broken pipe can flood an entire home—ceilings, floors, walls, furniture, and heating system. Trouble typically starts with:

- An earlier-than-usual cold snap.
- A colder-than-usual winter.
- A longer-than-usual cold spell.
- Owner away when the pipe freezes or (worse) thaws and water starts flowing through a break.



Fortunately, many pipe-damage losses are insured. But most people who have experienced them would do anything to avoid a replay. Here are some steps you can take in the off-season, as well as in winter, to be better prepared

OFF SEASON PREPARATION

1. Inspect—and perhaps map the pipes in the crawl space of your house, to know where they run and which are most vulnerable to the cold air of outside walls, air vents, etc. Unpleasant as this job may be, it is nicer in warm weather than subfreezing conditions. Dry conditions are nicer, too.
2. Insulate all exposed pipes and faucets with materials appropriate to your weather region. Ask your water supply district for advice.
3. Locate the main shut-off valve under your house, just outside your house, or near the street in front of your house, and make sure all members of the family know its location in case of emergency.

WINTER PRECAUTIONS

1. Close all outside faucets with insulating material. Put a plastic bag or other protection over the outside of this to keep the insulation dry. Disconnect garden hoses.
2. Close all air vents to the crawl space temporarily, to keep cold out. Use "foam" vent plugs or blocks of wood, or staple pieces of plastic, cardboard or other material.
3. Keep the furnace turned "up" during cold weather, night and day. This costs more than turning the heat down at night or while you're at work, but it can save you weeks of disrupted living.
4. Use heat tape very carefully, according to instructions, on exposed pipes or faucets that cannot be protected otherwise.
5. Let water flow (in severe weather) from the faucet furthest from the incoming water supply. The flow should be from both the hot and cold water faucets.
6. Leave cabinet doors open under sink and dishwasher at night so heat can circulate to pipes in those areas.

VACATION CABIN

1. Shut off water at the main supply.
2. Open all faucets, indoors and outdoors, to drain the system.
3. Pour anti-freeze into sink drains and toilet bowls and tanks that cannot be drained completely. Use only anti-freeze labeled for recreational vehicles, since automotive-type antifreeze could damage fixtures, produce toxic fumes or damage a septic system.