

Preventing Frozen Pipes

Frozen pipes not only disrupt daily life, they can also be expensive to repair. Pipes in your home can burst when water expands as it freezes. Combined with expanding water and extreme pressure, pipes do not have the strength to hold in the liquid. Generally pipes that are exposed to outdoor temperatures freeze more readily, such as hose bibs, swimming pool lines and water sprinkler lines. Pipes that run along exterior walls in the home with minimal insulation tend to freeze easier, too. Read on for some helpful hints.

Before the Temperature Drops

You can take precautions to prevent frozen pipes in your home before the temperature drops outside and during frigid months of the year with the following precautions:

- Insulate pipes in unheated interior areas such as crawl spaces and attics.
- Wrap pipes in heat tape or thermostatically-controlled heat cables.
- Open cabinet doors to expose pipes to warm air.



Safety First

If you turn on a tap and no water or only a trickle comes out, your pipes may be frozen. If so, turn off the main water valve and keep the tap on. Apply heat to the pipe by using an electric heating pad, hair dryer, portable space heater or by wrapping the pipe in towels soaked in hot water. You should apply heat until you regain water pressure. If this does not solve the problem, contact a licensed plumber to inspect your pipes.

- Seal any leaks with caulk or insulation that may allow cold air to ventilate the pipes.
- Disconnect outdoor items such as hoses and taps.
 - Shut off these items completely using an indoor valve and allow the excess water to drain out.
 - Do not use antifreeze on these items as it is environmentally harmful.
- Trickle a little water out of your taps periodically to keep water moving within the pipes.
- Keep your garage door closed if there is a water supply located outside.
- Keep your thermostat set at the same temperature during the day and night. If you lower the temperature of your home at night, you are running the risk of freezing your pipes, even though your heating bills may be a bit higher.
- Do not set your thermostat lower than 12.8° C when going on vacation. Ask someone to periodically check the temperature in your home while you are away.

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