



# Cold weather is here!

Frozen water pipes are inconvenient and costly to repair. Here are some ways to both prevent frozen pipes and thaw those that are already frozen.

1. **Insulate all water pipes from cold moving air and keep them dry.** Locate the main water shut off in case you need it. Leaks often happen if the pipe is thawed out.
2. **Use either heater tapes wrapped around the pipes or a heated reflector lamp in a dry enclosed space.** On cold nights, check the light to see that it is working. The heater tapes work by a built-in thermostat. In order to work, the tape must be wrapped between the pipe and the insulation. Some tapes do not allow insulation over heat tape. Follow manufacturer instruction.
3. **If electric power is unavailable or is lost, let the water run no faster than a slow constant drip; this is cheaper than repairing it.** First start a slow drip on the hot side faucet, then a faster drip on the cold side faucet. There is no need to run a lot of water. Bathrooms can be cold, as long as they aren't freezing.
4. **To thaw a frozen pipe, first check the pipe in the area of the freeze.** Some plastic or copper pipes will split and will flood the area when thawed. If the pipe looks busted or has a slit in it, call a plumber. If the pipe is all metal, it can be thawed by connecting a welder onto the pipe on each side of the frozen part. After a while it will be running again. This is just like connecting starter cables to the car battery, but with much longer cables.
5. **It is far better to heat the area around the frozen part with an electric space heater, a hand-held hair dryer, or a heat lamp in a reflector to prevent a fire.** Use care when placing heat generating devices. Space heaters, heat lamps and reflective lamps can generate high temperatures which may cause combustion of certain materials, Never leave these devices unattended for any amount of time when in use. If this is a problem, call the plumber. Some of them don't mind if you watch them as long as you are quiet and not in the way.
6. **Always disconnect your water hose from your outdoor spigot in the winter, or before the temperature in your area drops below freezing.** The water inside the hose can freeze, and the freezing continues back into the spigot until it reaches your pipes. If you have PVC plastic piping leading to this spigot, it will burst.



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