

Don't Freeze Up...

Winter weather will soon be here. Don't let snow and ice catch you unprepared. Prevent the expense and inconvenience of frozen pipes by taking a few simple steps now.

1. **Insulate Exposed Pipes and Faucets.** Outdoor faucets and pipes in unheated garages and crawl spaces are the most vulnerable in freezing weather. To prevent these pipes from freezing, wrap them with newspaper, rags, or other insulating material. Cover them with plastic and secure with string or wire.



2. **Locate Your Main Shut-Off Valve.** Don't wait for an emergency. Find your main shut-off valve now and test it! If a pipe breaks, you can stop excessive water loss and flooding by turning off your main shut-off valve. It is commonly located in the basement, the garage, or outdoors by the foundation, often near the front faucet. Test the valve by turning the handle to be sure it's working properly and identify it with a tag. If a main shut-off valve does not exist, you might consider having one installed by a plumber. Also, there is a shut-off valve in the meter box. If you attempt to turn it off, please do so with extreme caution. Turn firmly but gently, clockwise with a turn off wrench. Call the District if you need help.



Be Prepared!

3. **Never leave a garden hose attached to the faucet in freezing weather.**
4. **Winterize Your Vacant House.**

If you leave your house for several days, take the following steps to protect pipes from freezing:



- A. Turn off main shut-off valve.
- B. Turn off the electricity or gas to the water heater. If the house is going to be vacant for an extended length of time, the water heater should also be drained.
- C. Open indoor and outdoor faucets to drain pipes.
- D. Flush toilet once to drain the tank but not the bowl.
- E. Leave your heat on at a minimum temperature setting to help keep pipes from freezing inside interior walls.

5. Protect Pipes Prone to Freezing.

Pipes that have frozen in the past, despite precautionary measures, can be wrapped with electric heat tape. Or, if you don't mind the additional cost on your utility bills, you can let one indoor faucet slowly drip warm water overnight during spells of below freezing temperatures. Do not, however, leave water running in a house that will be vacant for an extended period of time.



Emergency Measures

- A. **THAWING FROZEN PIPES.** Frozen pipes may be thawed by wrapping them with rags and repeatedly pouring hot water over the rags. Once the pipes are thawed, remove the rags and rewrap pipes with dry insulation material to prevent re-freezing. If this method is not successful, call a plumber. **NEVER USE AN OPEN FLAME OR ELECTRICAL DEVICE TO THAW FROZEN PIPES!** Using these methods can cause fire or electric shock.

- B. **WHAT TO DO IF A WATER PIPE BREAKS.**

If a water pipe breaks, immediately turn off the main shut-off valve to control flooding and water damage.



- C. **WATER UTILITY EMERGENCY SERVICE.**

The District maintains the supply system from the source to your meter. You are responsible for protecting water pipes from freezing and repairing broken pipes on your property.

If the water pipes on your property break, and you are unable to turn off your water either at the main shut-off or at the water meter, a District crew member can help you, call **(425) 337-3647**. Since our crews are very busy during freeze emergencies, their response time may not be quick enough to prevent damage from flooding; therefore knowing the location of your shut-off valve and its proper operation is essential. You can help by keeping the water meter unobstructed for easy access in case of emergency.