



# Disaster readiness - response - recovery

## Preventing Frozen Pipes

When temperatures drop below freezing—especially for a significant amount of time—the potential for frozen pipes increases dramatically.

**Before cold weather hits, here are some precautionary steps you can take:**

- Know where and how to shut off your water from the main shut-off valve.
- Seal air leaks around pipes that allow cold air to seep in.
- Insulate pipes near outer walls, in crawl spaces or in attics.
- In exposed or problem areas, you may use heat tape or heat cables to prevent freezing. Make certain they are UL approved and that you follow manufacturers instructions.
- Disconnect garden hoses, shut off and drain water from pipes leading outside.
- Turn your faucet on just enough to have constant dripping.
- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to circulate around pipes under a sink.
- Leave heat on and set no lower than 55 degrees.
- If you plan to be away from home, have someone check on your house daily.

- Close foundation vents if the temperature drops below freezing for a significant period of time. Reopen when weather warms.

**If pipes freeze:**

- Shut off water valves. Stopping the flow of water can minimize the damage to your home.
- Call a plumber to thaw your pipes. Thawing them yourself can lead to greater damage and can be a hazard.
- If your pipes burst, call a plumber and your insurance agent.

**Although NOT recommended, if you do try to thaw:**

- Don't try to thaw the pipes with an open flame or torch.
- Don't use ungrounded electrical appliances outdoors, or near grounded water pipes.
- Be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around water.
- Never start a debris fire to warm pipes.
- When thawing pipes, always work from the open faucet toward the frozen area. This will keep steam from being trapped by ice and bursting the pipe.

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