

Winter Tips to Prevent Pipes From Freezing

Lake County Department of Utilities



With winter beckoning and frigid temperatures around the corner, it's critical to take precautionary measures to prevent your pipes from freezing and breaking. Broken pipes are no fun, and can lead to very costly repairs. For your convenience, below are some quick and easy tips to help prevent pipes from freezing:

- If you have a lawn sprinkler system, drain the water from your sprinkler supply lines
- Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses
- Close inside valves that supply outdoor spigots, open the outside spigot valves, and allow any remaining water in the pipes to drain
- Cover and insulate any outside faucets
- Insulate any pipes that are located in unheated areas (crawl spaces, attics, garages, pipes located against exterior walls)
- Consider wrapping pipes in unheated areas with electric heating tape
- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines located in the garage
- Allow a trickle of water to run from any faucets that have pipes located along exterior walls; the constant flow of water will help prevent sitting water in the pipes from freezing
- Keep the thermostat set to a reasonable temperature at all times, even at night

If you are planning a trip, or are away from your home for extended periods during the winter months, be careful how much you lower your heat. Although you will save money on your heating bill, it can also cause pipes to freeze and burst.

The best approach is to turn your water off at the main shut-off valve, then open all your faucets to drain any extra water in the pipes. By clearing all water out of the pipes, it reduces the possibility for water inside to freeze and expand. Knowing the location of the meter shut-off valve, and making sure it is operable is even beneficial for non-weather related emergencies when the water to your home needs to be turned off. In the event of a broken pipe, this valve will allow you to turn the water to your house off before any additional damage occurs. The shut-off valve is usually located where the water line comes into your house from the street, and is typically before the water meter.

If a frozen pipe is detected, use an electric hair dryer or portable space heater to help thaw the pipe. Never use a blowtorch or other flammable devices.