

How to guard against frozen pipes

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When temperatures dip down into the teens or colder, it's important to guard against frozen pipes within a home and businesses.

Pipes in attics, crawl spaces and outside walls are all vulnerable to freezing, especially if there are cracks or openings that allow cold outside air to flow across the pipes, said Matt Armand, Lake County Utilities Department public service coordinator.

"When temperatures drop significantly, water inside

pipes can freeze and expand," Armand said. "This can cause the pipe to burst, which in turn can lead to potential flooding, damage to your home or property and costly and inconvenient repairs."

He said pipes freeze mainly because of three reasons: a sudden and drastic drop in temperature, poor insulation, and thermostats set too low.

Frozen pipes can cause a significant amount of damage that is largely preventable, Armand said.

If a pipe bursts because of freezing water, the first step is to immediately shut off the water at the main shut-off

valve.

He said it is critical to know the location of the shut-off valve, and make sure it is operable. It is also beneficial to have this information when water needs to be turned off during non-weather-related emergencies.

In the event of a broken pipe, this valve allows someone to turn the water to the 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.

Once the water is shut off,

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

The Utilities Department provided these tips to help avoid frozen pipes:

- Drain the water from sprinkler system 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

- If there are water supply lines located in your garage, be sure to keep the door closed

- Allow a trickle of water to run from any faucet that has pipes located along exterior walls; the constant flow of water will help prevent water in the pipes from freezing

- Keep the thermostat set to a reasonable temperature at all times, even at night

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