

# Five Tips To Prevent Your Pipes From Freezing

With the cold weather upon us its inevitable that this situation is going to happen to one of our readers. There are several things you can do to avoid a costly and messy situation:

## 1. Drain outside water lines

Water lines in unheated or un-insulated areas are the most at risk for freezing. Turn off your outside faucet lines to the hose.

## 2. Keep the heat on

Keep the temperature in your house above 21 oC, particularly during extreme cold. Many of us turn the heat down at night to save energy, but it's best to avoid this when very cold temperatures are in the forecast. You can save yourself a costly water damage repair and insurance claim.

## 3. Keep a tap dripping!

Pipes can burst when water freezes and then expands. Water won't freeze as easily if it's running. When the weather is bitterly cold outside, leave a cold water tap dripping—the bathtub faucet is probably best. If notice the water pressure dropping, it's a sign your pipes are starting to freeze.

## 4. Keep interior doors open and garage doors closed

To make sure heat circulates freely, keep bathroom doors open. If you have water pipes in your garage, keep the garage doors closed to prevent freezing.

## 5. Think prevention... if you're going away this weekend.

No one wants to come back from vacation to a flooded house, so prep your home before you leave for a long period of time:

Turn off the water main to drain the water pipes.

Starting at the top floor of the house, turn on all the taps and flush the toilets.

Drain your hot water tank—turn off the inlet valve, attach a hose to the tank drain and run the water into the basement floor drain.

Unhook your washing machine hoses and drain them.

Ask a friend to check on your house—your home insurer might require this.

Keep the heating set to a temperature only a few degrees lower than usual.

Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors, as well as closet and attic doors, so warmer air can circulate.

### **Extra steps you can take to prevent damage**

Move exposed pipes

Be sure to Ask a professional to relocate exposed pipes to protect them from freezing, especially if you've had issues with frozen pipes in the past.

Insulate pipes

Insulate water pipes in unheated areas of the house, like the basement, garage and attic. Insulated pipes help reduce heat loss and keep water from freezing when temperatures drop. Doing this can also help cut your heating bill.

### **Thawing frozen pipes**

Despite your best efforts, your pipes can freeze during an exceptionally cold spell. If you turn on your taps and only a trickle of water comes out, or the water pressure suddenly drops, you might have a frozen pipe. Here's what to do:

Shut off the main water valve.

Warm the frozen pipes with a hair dryer, heating pad or

portable space heater. Don't use a blowtorch—it could damage plastic pipes or cause a fire.

If you can't reach the frozen pipe, or it won't thaw, call a licensed plumber.

Keep the nearest faucet turned on while treating a frozen pipe. As it melts, water will begin to flow through the faucet.

Check the other faucets in your home—if one pipe freezes, others might too.

Before turning on the water again, check for broken or damaged pipes—when in doubt, call a plumber. Better to spend a little money making sure everything is alright than risk more damage to your home.

If you do have water damage, call your insurance company.