

# Winterization

## Prepping your pipes for winter

Before the temperatures drop below freezing, it is important to prepare your pipes using these simple tips that could potentially save you thousands of dollars in water damage repairs.

1. Locate and exercise your master water shut-off valve: The valve is located in the black box that is out in front of your property on the street side. Once the valve is located, make sure everyone in the household knows where it is and exercise it regularly so that it can easily be shut off in case of an emergency.
2. Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses: Before freezing temperatures strike, it's important to disconnect and drain your outdoor hoses. This allows the water to drain from the pipe so an overnight freeze doesn't burst the faucet or the pipe it's connected to.
3. Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas: If you've got water pipes in unheated areas like the garage or a crawl space, it's best to wrap them in insulation before temperatures drop. Pipe wrapping materials and supply can be found at hardware stores.
4. Seal off access doors, air vents and cracks: When cold air seeps through overlooked openings, exposed water pipes may freeze. But remember; do NOT plug air vents by your furnace or water heater.

## Preventing frozen pipes when temperatures dip below freezing

1. Leave cabinet doors open for warm air circulation.
2. Let water trickle to keep it flowing.
3. Keep the garage door closed.

## What if it's too late?

Even if you take all the proper precautions, your pipes may still freeze during an extended cold spell. If that occurs, the best solution is to call a plumber.

- Do not try to thaw the pipe with an open flame.
- Do not heat only one spot on the pipe, as this can cause it to burst.

If you chose to try to thaw the pipe yourself, your best bet is a heat tape especially made to thaw water pipes. This tape is available at many hardware stores. Be careful when heating the pipe, as it may already be broken and just not leaking because the water inside is frozen. So be ready with the master shut-off valve in case water comes gushing out.