

Outside temps are dropping. Now is a good time to learn how to prevent water pipes from freezing. Some of the steps that experts recommend may go against your better instincts of conserving water and heat, but the extra expense is nothing compared with a hefty repair bill. Here's what to do...

Pipes that freeze most frequently are:

- Pipes that are exposed to severe cold, like outdoor hose bibs, swimming pool supply lines, and water sprinkler lines.
- Water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets.
- Pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.

How to Protect Pipes from Freezing

Before the onset of cold weather, protect your pipes from freezing by following these recommendations:

- Drain water from swimming pool and water sprinkler supply lines following manufacturer's or installer's directions. Do not put antifreeze in these lines unless directed. Antifreeze is environmentally harmful, and is dangerous to humans, pets, wildlife, and landscaping.
- Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors. Close inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs. Open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain. Keep the outside valve open so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand without causing the pipe to break.
- Add insulation to attics, basements and crawl spaces. Insulation will maintain higher temperatures in these areas.
- Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located in unheated areas. Look in the garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold-water pipes in these areas should be insulated.
- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes like a "pipe sleeve" or installing UL-listed "heat tape," "heat cable," or similar materials on exposed water pipes. Newspaper can provide some degree of insulation and protection to exposed pipes – even ¼" of newspaper can provide significant protection in areas that usually do not have frequent or prolonged temperatures below freezing.
- Consider relocating exposed pipes to provide increased protection from freezing.

How to Prevent Frozen Pipes

- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.
- When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold-water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much costlier repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55° F.
- If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle of water comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. If you are unable to locate the frozen area or if the frozen area is not accessible, call a licensed plumber.

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm/frozen-pipes.html>