How to Winterize Your Water Fixtures

How to Prevent Your Water Pipes and Meter From Freezing

Outdoor Faucets

Disconnect garden hoses from all outdoor faucets. This allows water to drain from frost free faucets.

If your home is older, the outdoor faucets may not be frost free:

- Find shut-off valve in the basement or crawl space where the pipe feeding the faucet goes to the outside.
- Shut it off.
- Open the outside faucet to make sure the faucet drains and the valve is completely shut off.
- Now the outside faucet can be left open.

Framed Buildings

- Check along the foundation for places cold winter winds can blow into the basement or crawl space. Plug them up with insulation.
- Check where the base plate of the building sets on the foundation. Even the slightest crack will allow cold air to enter.
- If your water pipes and/or water meter is on an outside wall, be sure they are not boxed in preventing heat from reaching them.
- If your pipes and/or water meter are boxed in, be sure to have doors that can be opened or panels that are louvered so the warmth from the basement can reach the fixtures.

Mobile Homes

- Make sure the skirting is in place and blocks the wind from blowing under the trailer.
- Water pipes under the trailer can be wrapped with heat tape.
- The meter can be wrapped too, as long as the heat tape is not touching the plastic face of the meter.

What To Do If Your Water Line Freezes

Identify where the line is frozen.

- Inside the house or building or
- from the water main to the house or building.

Step 1

- Open a kitchen or bathroom faucet. If there is no water from the hot side, but the cold side has water or visa versa, this normally means a pipe is frozen right under the kitchen or bathroom sink.
- Open the cabinet doors so heat can get to the pipes.
- A hair dryer can be used to provide additional heat.
- Never use an open flame.

Step 2

- If there is water in one part of the house, but not another, the pipes supplying water are frozen someplace inside the house, under the kitchen or bathroom cabinets, in the crawl space, under the trailer or in the basement.
- Determine which pipes are frozen and get heat to them immediately. Never use a torch or open flame of any kind.

Step 3

- No water anywhere in your house:
- Go to the place where the water service from the City water main enters your home.
- Check to see if the entrance valve turns freely.
    - If it does, shut it off.
    - Loosen one of the brass nuts at the end of the water meter.
    - Turn on the entrance valve.
    - If water leaks from this fitting, the water service from the City water main to the house is Not frozen.
    - Shut off the entrance valve, tighten the brass nut that you loosened.

Step 4

- Look for any place above the water meter where cold air can blow on the water line.
- Is any part of the water line boxed in or behind a basement wall.
- If you have checked everything and no water leaks from the brass nut you loosened on the end of the water meter, you probably have a frozen water service from the City water main to your house.

Step 5 -- Call a Plumber

- Frozen Water Service
- It is recommended you call a plumber who offers a thawing service using either a steam or hot water thawing system.
- Thawing is done by feeding a tube through the water service usually from inside the building out toward the City water main.
- Broken pipes in the home may also be repaired by the homeowner.

Have You Had Problems With Your Meter or Pipes Freezing Before?

You can do one or more of the following:

- Box in the meter and water supply line. Keep a light bulb lit in the boxed in area for heat.
- Heat tape the water pipes and meter. Be sure not to let the heat tape touch the plastic face of the meter.
- Let a trickle of water run from a faucet to keep water moving through the line. This water does go through the water meter and you will be charged for it just as if you were using it for any other purpose.

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