

WATER PIPES



Frozen water pipes are not life threatening, however frozen or broken water pipes do cause damage to homes each winter. If the pipes in the walls are not properly insulated they can freeze and rupture. (An eighth-of-an-inch crack in a pipe can release up to 250 gallons of water a day, soaking floors, rugs, and furniture.)

To protect your home or apartment from the mess and aggravation of frozen pipes, follow the simple steps below.

Before Cold Weather

- Locate and insulate pipes most susceptible to freezing - typically those near outer walls, in crawl spaces, or in the attic.
- Wrap the pipes with UL approved heat tape.
- Seal any leaks that allow cold air inside where pipes are located.
- Disconnect garden hoses. Shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets, this will reduce the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house.

When The Weather Gets Cold

- Let hot and cold water trickle at night from a faucet on an outside wall.
- Open cabinet doors to allowing heat to get to uninsulated pipes under a sink or appliance near an outer wall.
- Make sure heat is left on and set no lower than 55 degrees.
- If you plan to be away:
 - Have someone check your house daily to make sure the heat is still on.
 - Drain and shut off the water system (except indoor sprinkler systems).

If the Pipes Freeze

- Make sure you and your family knows how to shut off the water, in case pipes burst. Stopping the flow of water can minimize the damage to your home. Call a plumber and contact your insurance agent.
- Never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch.
- There is always the potential for electric shock in and around standing water, be careful.

Snohomish County Dept. of Emergency Management
3509 109th St. SW, Everett ~ 425-423-7635 ~ www.snodem.org
Washington Military Department,
Emergency Management Division, 2002