



TIPS TO AVOID OR THAW FROZEN PIPES

Understanding Your Water Service Pipe:

- Water service pipes are owned by you and the water supply.
- The part that the water supply owns runs from the watermain to the meter.
- The part that you own runs from the meter into the home.

Steps to Help Prevent Frozen Pipes:

- Know where to find your main water shut-off valve, in case your pipes burst .
- Insulate pipes most prone to freezing, especially near outside walls and in crawl spaces, the attic and garage. This can be done with foam pipe covers available from building supply or home improvement stores.
- Seal air leaks in your home and garage to stop cold air from getting in. Check around windows and doors, electrical wiring, dryer vents and pipes.
- Outdoor faucets are the first to freeze. Unscrew any hoses, turn off the outdoor water supply and let the taps drain.
- If your pipes are prone to freezing, there may be a problem you cannot see. Consider contacting a plumber for advice on how best to protect your home.
- Commercial water customers – protect fire lines by wrapping all lines exposed to the cold.

What to do When the Temperature Drops Well Below Zero:

- Keep all areas of your house warm, especially near the water meter, even when you're away. Learn more about your water meter.
- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Open kitchen, bathroom, and laundry cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around the plumbing.
- If leaving for an extended period of time:
 - Close the main valve that supplies water to your internal plumbing. Once the valve is closed, open a cold water tap to drain any remaining water from the pipes.

- You may also wish to have someone check your home regularly.
- For your own peace of mind, you can choose to run a pencil-thin stream of water to ensure some movement of water in the pipes. However, you will be charged for the water used if you choose this step. Be advised that if your sewage pipes are prone to freezing, this could be an issue.
 - Run cold water from the lowest point in the house, usually a laundry room sink or tub.
 - Ensure the drain is kept clear of debris to prevent overflowing or flooding.

If You Have No Water – How to Thaw Frozen Pipes in Your Home:

If you turn on your taps and have no water, the pipes in your home may be frozen. Likely places for frozen pipes include:

- Against exterior walls.
- Where the water service pipe enters the home through the foundation or 2 wall.

Here are some tips and precautions when thawing frozen pipes.

Important precautions:

- Do not use a torch with an open flame to thaw pipes – this is a fire hazard.
- Ensure you know the location of your master water shut-off valve. If the pipe breaks you will need to immediately shut off the water in your house until the pipe is repaired.

Steps to thaw frozen pipes:

- Turn on a tap, preferably the cold-water faucet in the laundry room.
- Apply heat to the suspected frozen pipe by warming the air around it or applying heat directly to the pipe. You can use a hair dryer, space heater or warm towel or rag.
 - Do not leave electrical devices unattended, or use kerosene or propane heaters, charcoal stoves or any open flame to thaw a frozen pipe.
- Depending on the outside temperature and the extent of freezing within the pipe, the thawing process could take between one and six hours.
- Once the pipes have thawed, turn the water back on slowly and check for cracks and leaks.

If the above steps do not resolve the issue:

If you are unable to thaw the pipes or locate the frozen area, you may wish to contact a licensed plumber for advice.



Information taken and adapted from: [Prevent or Thaw Frozen Pipes – City of Toronto](#)