

Preventing Frozen Water Service

Check the water temperature: An indicator of an impending water service line freeze up is colder than normal water temperature. Allow “cold” water to run from the faucet until it is cold, fill a container, and then check the temperature with a small indoor/outdoor thermometer that can be immersed in water. If the temperature drops below 40 degrees, frost may be getting close to your service line and you could have an impending freeze up.

If cold water temperature is below 40 degrees, let the water run: You can help prevent your line from freezing by letting a cold water faucet run at a pencil size stream throughout the day and night. You do not need a strong flow, just enough to keep the water flowing. Flowing water freezes slower than standing water in a pipe. Letting the water run at this level will average 0.25 gpm (1/4 gallon per minute) which equals 360 gallons per day. Although the City cannot credit you for the extra water usage, this cost can be considered as insurance to avoid the inconvenience and costly expense of correcting a frozen service line.

As the weather warms up, the frost is pushed deeper into the ground, so the risk of frozen service lines could continue well into spring. Continue to monitor the cold water temperature and run water as needed to keep the service line from freezing.

Preventing Frozen Interior Pipes

If possible, insulate walls where piping runs.

Shut off water to outside faucets.

Do not turn your heat down during windy cold days: The cooling down period allows the cold to penetrate walls. The pipes are exposed to this cold air.

Attempt to get heat into interior building pipes: These areas are generally not heated and can receive cold air coming in through the walls. Attempt to get heat into interior building pipes by opening doors to crawl spaces, closets, cabinets and cupboards. Insulate and seal off the cold air sources that may cause the plumbing to freeze. This will help prevent frozen water supply and waste piping. If pipes need to be thawed, use a hair dryer, hot air or water, or steam. If you're unable to thaw the plumbing, contact a plumber to assist you.

Have someone check on your house when you go out of town: Total house freeze-ups that require major repair result from homes where the heat goes out and the temperature in the house drops below 32 degrees. All the plumbing in the home, such as toilets, faucets, etc., then freezes.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/winter-storm/preventing-thawing-frozen-pipes>