



# November Tip of the Month

## Preventing and Thawing Frozen Pipes

When water freezes in a pipe it expands. If it expands enough, the pipe bursts, and water escapes.

**A 1/8-inch crack in a pipe can spew up to 250 gallons of water a day, causing flooding, serious structural damage, and the potential for mold.**

### Preventing Frozen Pipes

Before the onset of cold weather, prevent freezing of these water supply lines and pipes by following these recommendations:

- Remove, drain and store your outdoor hoses inside for the winter. Cover outside faucets.
- Insulate pipes in your home's crawl spaces and attic, even if you live in a climate where freezing is uncommon. Exposed pipes are most susceptible to freezing.
- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes like a "pipe sleeve" or installing UL-listed "heat tape," or similar materials on exposed water pipes. Follow manufacturer's recommendations for installing and using these products.



### During Cold Weather, Take Preventive Action

- 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.
- When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes.
- 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 more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.

### Leaving During the Holidays?

- Set the thermostat in your house no lower than 55°F (12°C).
- Ask a friend or neighbor to check your house daily to make sure it's warm enough to prevent freezing.
- If you plan to be gone an extended period of time, consider shutting off and draining the water system.

### To Thaw Frozen Pipes

If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Don't panic. Just because they're frozen doesn't mean they've already burst. Here's what you can do:

- If you turn on your faucets and nothing comes out, leave the faucets turned on and call a plumber.
- **Never try to thaw a pipe with a torch or other open flame because it could cause a fire hazard.** Water damage is preferable to burning down your house!
- You may be able to thaw a frozen pipe with the warm air from a hair dryer. Start by warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible, working toward the coldest section of pipe.
- If your water pipes have already burst, turn off the water at the main shutoff valve in the house; leave the water faucets turned on. Contact a licensed plumber or building professional to make the appropriate repairs.



For more information visit [www.kitsapdem.org](http://www.kitsapdem.org)



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