



Frozen Water Pipes

One of the hazards of winter that a lot of people have experienced is frozen water pipes. Since water expands as it freezes it creates tremendous pressure on the pipes, which in turn can cause them to break and damage. To safely and effectively thaw frozen water pipes you must first diagnose where the pipe is frozen.

Step 1:

- Identify where the line is frozen -- Inside the house or building? Or, from the water main to the house or building?

Step 2:

- Turn on every faucet in the house, including the bathtub faucet. This will help you determine the area of the blockage. If the water in the kitchen faucet is frozen but the water in the bathroom faucet works, then you are probably dealing with an isolated problem.
- Once you have figured out which faucet contains the frozen line, turn off all other faucets.
- Open the cabinet doors so that heat can get to the pipes.
- **NEVER use an open flame.** Such as a blowtorch or propane heater to thaw a frozen water line. It can cause damage to pipes, meter can and water meter. This can present a serious fire hazard.

Step 3:

- 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, 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 4:

- Frozen Water Service -- It is recommended that 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 house, trailer or building out toward the water meter. Broken pipes in the home may also be repaired by the homeowner.

Here are a few suggestions of how to prevent water pipes in your home from freezing

- Before the cold weather sets in we recommend that you check and insulate any exposed water pipes outside of your home.
- Insulate any exposed cold/hot water pipes with heat tape or similar material found at your nearest hardware stores.
- Disconnect and drain the water from the garden hose.
- Have the cold water drip in sinks and/or bathtubs.
- Set your indoor thermostat to at least 55° to help prevent any interior water pipes from freezing.

Thawing out a Frozen Water Line

- Turn on the water faucet allowing for a slow drip. If the temperatures are freezing, we recommend a light steady stream.
- Allowing water to flow through the pipes may help to keep the water flowing.
- As your frozen water line begins to thaw, water will begin to flow as running water will help to melt ice in the pipe.
- Open cabinet doors near plumbing areas to allow warmer air to circulate will help.
- If you are unable to locate the frozen area or this area is not accessible, call a licensed plumber.
- **Do Not** pour hot water directly on the water pipes or faucets.
- **Do Not** use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove or other open flame device to thaw out a frozen water line as this will only create more damage.
- **Do Not** attempt to remove the water meter.

Future Protection:

- Consider relocating exposed pipes to provide increased protection from freezing.
- Add insulation to attics, basements and crawl space. Insulation will maintain higher temperatures in these areas.
- Install skirting panels around mobile homes.
- Wrap or insulate all exposed water lines and pipes.
- For more information and tips on how to prevent water line freezing, contact a licensed plumber or building professional.



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