

Protecting Your Water Pipes in Cold Weather

Western Washington's weather is often-times unpredictable. **Don't let this year's winter weather catch you unprepared.** To prevent the expense and inconvenience of frozen pipes, take the following precautions to help minimize future problems.

BEFORE Freezing Weather

- * Never leave a garden hose attached to the faucet in freezing weather. Disconnect and drain hoses from outside faucets.
- * Winterize irrigation systems.
- * Insulate backflow devices and outside faucets with newspaper, rags or other insulating material. Cover them with plastic and secure with string or wire.
- * Cover foundation vents with foam blocks or cardboard.
- * Insulate hot and cold pipes in unheated areas, such as the garage, crawl space or attic.
- * Locate your main shutoff valve to your home and make sure you show household members how to turn off water to the house in case of an emergency.

DURING Freezing Weather:

- * Temporarily, keep a steady drip of cold water running at an inside faucet. This keeps water moving, making it less likely to freeze.
- * Open cupboard doors under sinks, especially where plumbing is in an outside wall, to allow interior heat to warm the pipes.
- * If you plan to be away from home for several days, shutting off the water can reduce the chances of broken pipes. Leave the heat on to your home to at least 55 degrees. Shut off water to the house and open all faucets to drain pipes; flush the toilet once to drain the tank, but not the bowl. ***If you drain your pipes, be sure to turn off your water heater first.*** Call PUD Customer Service to request water to be turned off at the meter.
- * If your neighbor is away or you are next to a vacant house and you suspect a water leak, call PUD Customer Service.

IF YOUR PIPES FREEZE:

- * Determine which pipe(s) are frozen. If some faucets work but others don't, that means you have a pipe or pipes inside your home that are frozen.
- * If a pipe is frozen, assume it may be broken and will leak when thawed. Local hardware or home improvement stores may carry leak repair supplies. Be ready to shut off your water in a hurry when the line thaws.
- * If there is no water to your home, the problem may be where the water line enters your home or at the meter. Call PUD Customer Service to ensure that water is flowing from your meter correctly. However, crews are not able to help fix frozen pipes between the water meter and the house or inside the house.
- * **THAWING FROZEN PIPES.** Frozen pipes may be thawed by wrapping them with rags and repeatedly pouring hot water over the rags. Once the pipes are thawed, remove the rags and rewrap the pipes with dry insulation material to prevent refreezing. **NEVER USE AN OPEN FLAME OR ELECTRICAL DEVICE TO THAW FROZEN PIPES.** Using these methods can cause a fire or electric shock.
- * If, despite your best efforts, you cannot restore the water to your home, it is best to call a licensed plumber.

For more information on how you can prevent frozen water pipes, please feel free to contact PUD Water Resources at 425-397-3000 during business hours of 7:30AM to 4PM.

Snohomish County PUD Customer Service
425-783-1000, Monday through Friday, 8AM to 5:30PM, excluding holidays