

How to prevent freezing pipes in your home



Here are some tips for preventing freezing and bursting pipes:

- **Check around your home for areas where your water supply (pipes) are located in unheated areas**, aren't properly insulated or have been known to freeze.
 - **In the garage.**
Tip: Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in your garage.
 - **Near the foundation** or cracks in the basement wall.
Tip: Repair cold air leaks to reduce drafts on piping and meter as well.
 - **Near exterior walls in unheated rooms.**
Tip: It's a good idea to insulate the walls near exposed piping.
 - **In unheated crawl spaces and under kitchen/bathroom cabinets.**
Tip: Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing.
 - Tip: Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated. Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes like a "pipe sleeve" or installing UL-listed "heat tape," "heat cable" or similar materials on exposed water pipes. Add insulation to attics, basements and crawl spaces. Insulation will maintain higher temperatures in these areas.
 - Tip: If possible, place a heat source in unheated areas where the meter and pipes are – use an electric heater with a thermostat or put vents in the duct work in basements or crawl spaces.
- If you're going to leave your home for any extended period of time, **set the heat to no lower than 55 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- If you didn't take care of all your fall cleaning and left garden hoses attached to outdoor water supplies, **remove attached garden hoses now.** When the water in a hose freezes, it expands, increasing pressure throughout the whole plumbing system.

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Here are some precautions in the event of frozen or burst pipes to avoid injury and/or further damage:

- **Know where your home's main water shut-off valve is** located so you can turn the water off quickly if a pipe bursts.
- **Check and clear drains** to prevent basement flooding in case of a burst pipe.
- **Check for cracked pipes** as they may spray water into electrical appliances when thawed.
- If you notice unusually low water flow at a water fixture, run water from the faucet for several minutes to see if the water flow improves as this could be a sign of a freezing pipe.
- **If your home's pipes do freeze, never thaw them** with an open flame or torch or other source of extreme heat, as this may cause a fire and the temperature change could cause pipes to burst.

Tip: Instead, blow frozen pipes with hot air from a hair dryer. Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible or if you cannot thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.

- If you have other questions about your home's water plumbing, consult a licensed plumber.