



## **Frozen Pipe Announcement**

**If you have no water and suspect a frozen pipe, call a plumber to determine if the frozen pipe is within your home. If the problem is outside your home or business, Worcester DPW&P Water Operations may be able to help though there may be a charge to the property owner. Call 508-929-1300.**

### **Prevent Frozen Pipes**

- **Insulate pipes and faucets in unheated areas**

Wrap pipes with pipe-insulating materials, which is available at home centers, hardware and plumbing supply stores, or use insulation. Be sure to protect all pipes in unheated areas, such as crawl spaces and garages and check the insulation around pipes regularly.

- **Patch any cracks and holes in doors, windows and walls near pipes.**

When temperatures drop near zero, a high wind blowing through a small opening can freeze a nearby pipe. When patching these openings, do not block the air vents that your furnace needs for proper operation.

- **Seal leaks**

Look for and seal cold air leaks around electrical wiring, dryer vents and pipes that pass through exterior walls. Use caulking to keep the cold air out and the heat in. With severe cold, even a tiny opening can let in enough cold air to cause a pipe to freeze.

- **Make sure that heat can circulate around pipes.**

Pipes in an outside walls, or in an enclosed area can freeze, especially when the wind-chill factor is well below zero and heat is not circulating through these areas.

- **Never shut off your heat.**

If you are planning to leave your home or business for an extended period and you don't drain your pipes, you should lower the thermostat but **never** shut it off. The lack of heat can freeze the pipes in walls and in the basement. If freezing occurs, the pipes may burst. When the area warms up, the thawing water will cause flooding and possible property damage.

- **Turn off outside faucets**

Disconnect the hose; turn off the water from inside your home or business, then drain the pipe. Leave the outside valve open slightly so any water left in the pipe can flow out and not freeze in the line.

**If, despite these precautions, your pipes do freeze, it is best to call a licensed plumber. Make sure you keep the name and number of your plumber handy throughout the winter.**

## **Thawing Frozen Pipes**

If you can locate the frozen section of pipe and try to thaw it yourself, be sure to take the following precautions to protect yourself and your property.

- **Do not use a torch with an open flame**

You risk setting your property on fire. In addition, overheating one area can cause the pipe to burst. Open flames in homes present a serious fire danger, as well as a severe risk of exposure to lethal carbon monoxide.

- **Use a hair dryer or blower**

Open the faucet first. Start by warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible, working towards the coldest section of the pipe. Water running through the pipe will help to melt the ice in the pipe.

- **Place a warm towel or rag around the pipe.**

Pour hot water over the cloth. Repeat several times until the pipe is not frozen.

- **Make sure you know the location of your master water shut-off valve**

The frozen pipe may already be broken and, when the water is thawed, it may leak. In this case, you will need to shut off the water in your home or business until the leaky pipe is fixed.