

Winterizing Your Home

Homeowners report millions of dollars in damage each year from frozen water pipes bursting. Here are a few tips to help you prevent such damage in your home.

- Drain water from swimming pool lines, water sprinkler supply lines and outdoor hoses. Don't cap the outside valve – leaving it open will allow any water in there to expand outward. Leave water in the pool itself to help keep walls from being cracked by expanding ground water.

- Insulate all pipes that run outside or along an exterior wall using pipe sleeves, foam, tape or newspaper. Caulk around pipes where they enter the house. Make sure the pipes in indoor, unheated areas are well insulated, including in attics, basements and garages.



- Open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate to the plumbing.

- Let a trickle of water run from faucets during extremely cold weather.

For those leaving home for the winter:

- Close foundation vents to prevent cold air from coming in, and cover the vents well with wood or Styrofoam.

- Shut off the outside water and drain the valve.

- Make sure outside pipes and inside, unheated

pipes are well insulated.

- Shut off and drain the indoor water system. Turn off the main valve, turn on all faucets and flush the toilet, then drain the main valve and shut off all the faucets. Make sure the water heater is turned off during this process. Drain the heater, as well as pipes for the refrigerator, dishwasher and washing machine.

- Make sure the water is nearly all drained from the toilet tank, but keep a bit of water in the bowl to prevent sewer gas from backing up into the toilet.

- Keep all cabinets open to keep the pipes warm inside.

- Turn thermostat no lower than 55° Fahrenheit.

