

PROTECT THOSE PIPES!

Each year cold weather results in problems with customers' water pipes freezing and sometimes bursting. These problems are inconvenient and can be very expensive to repair. Here are a few simple precautions you may wish to try to prevent the inconvenience and cost of water damage which could result if water lines freeze.



BEFORE THE FREEZE

Locate the Shutoff Valve

If pipes burst, water could begin to pour into your house, and time would be critical in preventing damage to walls, floors, or carpet. The most likely locations for the shutoff valve are:

- Where the water supply enters your home
- Near your clothes washer hookup
- Near your water heater

Try turning this valve off and on in advance to make sure you've found the right one. Mark it with paint, a tag, or ribbon and make sure everyone in the family knows where it is. If you are unable to locate your shutoff valve, you may want to contact your builder or plumber for assistance.

Eliminate Drafts and Insulate

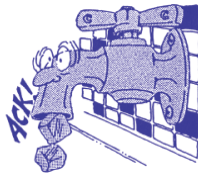
Wind blowing through cracks or openings to your house will cause freezing more quickly than cold temperature alone:

- Keep basement, garage doors, and windows near your water pipes closed during cold weather.
- Seal air leaks or cracks in the crawl space or basement. Air vents should be closed or covered from the inside.

Pipes in unheated parts of the house should be insulated. Wet insulation is **worse** than no insulation...replace it.

Outside Faucet

- Disconnect garden hoses and drain.
- When a separate shutoff is installed, outside faucets should be drained.



Meter Protection

Check your meter box to make sure the cover is not displaced, broken, or missing. These types of problems will allow meters to freeze. Any of these conditions should be reported to the Waterworks at 926-1000.

DURING THE FREEZE

Low temperatures, wind, and the duration of freezing weather are factors in freeze ups. When temperatures are predicted to be in the teens or below, you may wish to leave a trickle of water running from a faucet at the highest level in your house. This trickle should be about the size of the lead in a pencil. You only waste money by having the faucet fully open.

If Pipes Freeze...

If weather is especially severe, your pipes may freeze despite your precautions. If you decide to thaw pipes yourself, BE CAREFUL! The pipe may be cracked, and water may come out full force. This is especially dangerous if you use electrical appliances, such as hair dryers, lights, etc. Even if a pipe isn't cracked, too much heat may cause it to burst.

NEVER THAW PIPES WITH AN OPEN FLAME

If you have no water at all in your home, there is the possibility of a frozen water meter.



Call Newport News

Waterworks at 926-1000 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) and 234-4800 (after 5 p.m. and on weekends). A water service representative will determine if you have a meter problem. Any freezing problem beyond the meter connection (from the meter into your home) cannot be handled by Waterworks... so be wise... PROTECT YOUR PIPES!



Illustrations courtesy of
County of Henrico Public Utilities

City of Newport News
Department of Public Utilities

