

## Did you know...

Running brooks and streams freeze during bitterly cold weather. If we take a lesson from nature, we have learned that leaving faucets open and running water overnight may not prevent pipes from freezing.

Homes, whether new or old, often have cracks and openings around doors and windows. A small crack in a door, window or wall acts like a blow torch in reverse during near-zero temperatures. High winds can freeze a nearby pipe even though the surrounding room temperature may be 68 degrees.

When you consider that even a tiny 1/8-inch gap around a typical entryway door is the equivalent of drilling a 5 1/2-inch diameter hole through an outside wall, closing that gap is well worth the effort.

Here is an easy way to detect leaks around doors and windows in your home: On a windy day, close all the doors and windows. Light a stick of incense, avoiding drapes and other flammables, move the lit stick along the edges of your doors and windows. Wherever the smoke is sucked out or blown into the room, there is a leak.

## EMERGENCY SERVICE

District crews and phone operators are extremely busy during freeze emergencies, but we will do everything in our power to help with your emergency.

Please keep in mind, however, that our response may not be quick enough to prevent water damage caused by broken pipes.

South Tahoe PUD maintains the water supply system from the well to your property line. You are responsible for protecting your water pipes from freezing, and for repairing broken pipes on your property.

If you lose all water service during a freeze and still have problems after taking the emergency measures suggested in this pamphlet, you will probably need to call a plumber.

If pipes on your property break and you are unable to turn off the house shut-off valve or do not have one, please call us at 530.544.6474 during normal business hours. Nights, weekends or holidays please call our emergency line at 530.544.4964.

There are no charges for service calls that occur between 7:30am—5:30pm, Monday—Friday. **Nights, weekends and holiday calls will incur charges from \$190.00 to \$240.00.**



# Protect Your Home from Frozen & Broken Pipes

Winter is one of the nicest times of the year. It is full of family gatherings with lots of good things to eat. But before you get too comfortable sitting around the fireplace, take time to freeze protect your home and prevent headaches and expenses that might occur when..



*Old Man Winter comes to visit.*

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## Tips to help you weather the winter!

- \* Insulate exposed pipes & faucets. Fiberglass or polyethylene pipe insulation covers protect your pipes against freezing. There are a variety of sizes, so there is insulation for just about every size pipe, including elbows and tee connectors. Ideally use an insulation with the highest R-value.
- \* Seal holes & cracks in exterior walls, foundations and around pipes that penetrate exterior walls.
- \* Temporarily close foundation vents.
- \* Mark your home shut-off valve and regularly shovel a path to your shut-off valve. If you do not have a shut-off valve, consider installing one.
- \* Disconnect and drain hoses from outside faucets. Use slip-on outdoor spigot/faucet covers to protect your exposed pipes and valves against freezing and drafts from entering through faucet cut-outs.
- \* Turn off and drain irrigation systems.
- \* Look for Underwriters Laboratory (UL) seal of approval on any electrical products. And, keep in mind, heat tape products will not function during power outages.

## Winterize Your Vacant Home

If you leave your house for several days or months, the following steps will help protect your pipes and plumbing from freezing:



- \* Turn off your home shut-off valve.
- \* Turn off or down the water heater.
- \* Open indoor & outdoor faucets to drain pipes. Remember to close faucets once pipes have drained.
- \* The Insurance Information Institute ([www.iii.org](http://www.iii.org)) recommends keeping your house heated to a minimum of 65 degrees. The temperature inside the walls where the pipes are located is substantially colder than the walls themselves. A temperature lower than 65 will not keep pipes inside your walls from freezing.
- \* Keep all bedroom, bathroom and close doors opened, along with cabinet doors beneath kitchen and bathroom sinks. This will allow the warm air to circulate in all your rooms and around the pipes under the sinks.
- \* Make sure the District has a current emergency phone on your account in case we need to contact you.
- \* If you have a neighbor you can trust, you may want to leave them with a key and emergency contact information.
- \* Check with your insurance company about special requirements for vacation or homes left vacant while traveling.

## Protect Pipes from Freezing

Pipes that have frozen in the past, despite precautionary measures, can be wrapped with electrical heat tape and insulation. **Do not leave water running to prevent frozen pipes.** It does not always work, and it wastes a valuable natural resource.

### If Your Pipes Do Freeze

Open a faucet near the frozen point to release water vapor from the melting ice. If you know where the frozen spot is, wrap the pipe with towels and repeatedly pour hot water over the towels. **Never use a flame or a hair dryer to thaw pipes—the risks of fire or electrocution are too great!**

If there is no water at all to your home, the problem may be at the street. If the water service is frozen at the meter or service to the water main, it is the District's responsibility. Call us at 530.544.6474 24 hours a day.

### If Your Pipes Break

If your pipes do break, shut off your water using your home shut-off valve to control flooding and water damage.

If you cannot get the water off, call us at 530.544.6474, and help will be on the way.

### Know Your Insurance Coverage

Standard homeowner policies cover most kinds of damage that results from freezing. However, not all policies cover back-ups in sewers or drains, which can happen during freezing conditions. It is a good idea to check with your insurance company to know what your insurance will cover in case of freeze damage.