Frozen Pipe Prevention Checklist

Pipes in exterior walls, crawl spaces, garages and attics freeze first. A few small steps before a hard freeze can prevent a burst pipe and the water damage that follows.

Before the freeze

- [ ] Disconnect garden hoses and shut off outdoor spigots from the inside valve if your home has one.
- [ ] Insulate exposed pipes in the garage, crawl space and attic with foam pipe sleeves.
- [ ] Seal gaps where cables or pipes enter the house, and keep the garage door closed.
- [ ] Know where your main water shutoff is and make sure everyone in the house can find it and turn it.

During a hard freeze

- [ ] Open cabinet doors under sinks on exterior walls so warm air reaches the pipes.
- [ ] Let a faucet drip slowly on the coldest nights, using the tap farthest from where the water enters.
- [ ] Keep the heat on and set to the same temperature day and night, even when you are away.

If water stops flowing

- [ ] Keep the faucet open and warm the pipe slowly with a hair dryer or warm towels, starting near the faucet and moving toward the frozen part.
- [ ] Never use an open flame or a torch on a pipe.
- [ ] If you cannot find the frozen section, or a pipe looks split, shut off the main water and contact a plumbing professional.

If a pipe bursts

- [ ] Shut off the main water valve right away.
- [ ] Turn off the electricity to wet areas if you can do so safely from a dry spot.
- [ ] Open faucets to drain the lines, take photos of the damage, and remove valuables from the wet area.
- [ ] Contact a plumbing professional, and a water damage specialist if the water has spread.

Frequently asked questions

At what temperature do pipes freeze?

Pipes in unheated areas can freeze when the temperature stays below about 20 degrees Fahrenheit for several hours, and sooner with wind or poor insulation.

Does dripping a faucet really help?

Moving water is harder to freeze, and a drip also relieves pressure between a frozen spot and the faucet, which lowers the chance of a split.

Should I turn off the water if I am leaving for a trip?

In cold weather many homeowners shut off the main and drain the lines, and keep the heat on. Ask a plumbing professional what suits your home.

Online version: https://localrepairline.com/frozen-pipe-prevention-checklist

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