

How to Help Prevent Frozen Water Pipes and Water Meters

When below freezing temperatures are sustained over a few days, water pipes and meters that are close to cold air may freeze. The Sherburn Public Works Department urges residents to take steps to prevent water pipes and meter from freezing. Frozen water meters and water pipes can stop water service and may be expensive to repair or replace. Property owners are responsible for protecting both water pipes and the water meter from damage. Preventing pipes and the meter from freezing is easier than trying to thaw them. The Sherburn Public Works Department offers these money saving suggestions:

To Help Prevent Frozen Water Pipes

Make frequent use of your water supply: Flowing water often breaks up ice. Keep your faucets circulating by having them drip all day and night as a preventative procedure. It's less expensive than to repair a frozen or burst pipe.	Eliminate cold drafts near water pipes: Tightly close doors and windows to the outside. Install storm windows on basement windows. Eliminate drafts from crawl space. Fill cracks in walls and around windows. Turn off water connections to garden hose. Connections at an inside valve and drain the exposed piping before freezing temperatures set in.
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Provide warmth to the water pipes:

Open the door to the room where the pipes are located to allow warmth to circulate. Place a heat lamp near water pipes. Never use open flames. Wrap pipes in insulation or heat tape. If your kitchen or bathroom sink is located against an outside wall, insulate the wall. Open cabinet door below the sink to allow warm air to reach the pipe.

How To Thaw Frozen Water Pipes

The pipes are frozen if no water comes from your faucets when you turn them on. Most likely the pipes nearest a wall, door, window, or along the floor are frozen.

1. Start by opening a faucet near the frozen pipe to release any vapor from the melting ice and so that you'll know when the water starts flowing again.
2. Begin warming the pipes nearest the faucet and work toward the frozen section.
3. Blow warm air on the pipe using a hair dryer. Do not leave the dryer unattended or allow it to overheat.
4. Do not use a blowtorch or open flame to warm pipes. This is a fire hazard and could cause an explosion.
5. Once water has begun to flow again, let a pencil-sized stream of water flow through the faucet until normal heating is restored to the area.
6. Eliminate cold drafts and allow warm air to circulate around the pipes to prevent freezing again.

How To Help Prevent A Frozen Water Meter

It is colder near the floor and along the block wall of a basement than at the ceiling, so make sure warm air is allowed to circulate around your meter. Follow the previous instruction about preventing freezing frozen water pipes. If your meter is in a separate room, leave the door open to this room to allow warmth to circulate. If your meter is in a cabinet, open the cabinet door. If the meter is in an outdoor pit, check to see that the cover fits properly and that it has no cracks into which cold wind can blow. The pipes, valves and the meter inside such pits should not touch the concrete walls.

If you suspect damage to water pipes or the water meter, call the Sherburn Public Works Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at (507)-764-4491.