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Protecting Your Pipes

Unfortunately, due to the harsh temperatures often seen during the winter in Warwick Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, your pipes may freeze or even break. Freezes and breaks happen because water expands when it freezes, which places a tremendous amount of pressure on your plumbing system. The following are simple steps to prevent or fix frozen or broken pipes in your home or business:

Indoor Water Sources

- Check frequently to make sure pipes are not frozen by opening and turning on taps in your home. If your pipes tend to freeze in the winter, consider allowing your water to drip slightly from your faucets.
- Consider insulating pipes, faucets, and water meters in cold areas of your home. If you have pipes in the attic, an unheated garage, or crawl space under the house, wrap pipes before temperatures drop. Hardware or building supply stores will have pipe wrapping materials available. You can also open cabinet doors with pipes inside in order to allow warm air to circulate.
- Seal off access doors, air vents, and cracks. Winter air that enters a home through any opening can quickly freeze exposed water pipes.

Outdoor Water Sources

A single overnight freeze can burst either the spigot or the pipe a hose is connected to. Before temperatures drop, remove, drain, and store outside garden hoses. Close the valves inside that control the water supply to the outside hose spigot. Then, open the outside hose spigot to allow any remaining water to drain.

If Leaving Your Home for an Extended Period

Before leaving, consider closing your main water shut-off valve and draining the system by opening all faucets and flushing the toilets. The main water shut-off valve is typically located near the water meter where the water service line enters the building. To shut-off individual fixtures, check for valves under sinks and behind toilets.



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What to Do If a Freeze or Break Happens

- Before attempting to thaw frozen pipes, turn off the master shutoff valve. Once the pipe is thawed, a leak could be exposed if the pipe is broken.
- Do not under any circumstances use a torch with an open flame which would create a dangerous fire hazard. Also, overheating a single spot can burst the pipe. Heating a soldered joint could allow it to leak or come completely apart. The easiest tool for thawing a pipe is a hair dryer. Wave the warm air along the pipe, not on one spot. If you don't have a hairdryer, wrap the frozen section with rags or towels and pour hot water over them.
- Save the name and phone number of a local plumber and have it handy throughout the winter in case any fix becomes too difficult.

