



## **RECORD BREAKING FREEZING TEMPERATURE COMING; PREPARE NOW**

Extreme temperatures and winter storms are on their way. Wondering what to do to prepare?

1. Drain any water fountains or automatic watering equipment; unplug pumps.
2. Remove hoses from exterior faucets.
3. Shut off the water to your outdoor faucets, drain the lines, and insulate the hose bibs.
4. Repair or replace weather stripping around windows and doors, vents and fans, plumbing, air conditioners and electrical and gas lines.
5. Use caulk, spray foam or other insulation to seal all crack, holes and other openings on exterior walls. Even small holes where cable wires or phone lines enter your home can be an entry point for freezing air or places where precious indoor heat can escape.
6. Insulate electrical outlets and switches on exterior walls with foam seals available at home centers.
7. When indoor plumbing pipes run through exterior walls, take care to monitor them in the winter and make sure wall insulation is up to recommended standards. We had a friend whose pipe burst in their living room wall causing a huge problem.
8. Let faucets drip a little bit to prevent freezing pipes. If any of your indoor faucets are located on exterior walls that aren't adequately insulated, set your faucets to a slow drip. For maximum effectiveness, make sure both the hot and cold lines are opened slightly since both are vulnerable.
9. Well-insulated basements and crawl spaces will help protect pipes. Close foundation vents and windows to basements. Wrap vulnerable basement pipes with pipe insulation.
10. Know where your water shutoff valve is so you can turn off the water in case of an emergency. Should a water line freeze and burst, you will need to shut off your home's water supply immediately. Make sure the shut off valve is not blocked by stuff so that it will be easily accessible in the event of a plumbing emergency. Test the shut-off valve to be sure it is working well. Turning the valve handle all the way clockwise should shut off all water to the house. If the valve is rusted open or only closes partially, replace the main shut-off valve immediately—this is usually a job for a professional plumber.
11. Teach all family members where shut off valves are located and how to turn them off.
12. Locate the water meter into your home. Invest in a meter key (or keep an adjustable wrench handy), so you will be able to shut off the water at the meter, should the house shut-off valve fail. Practice turning the water on and off, so you understand how it is done. Your city may have

# Totally Ready

*Prepped when it really counts*

regulations against shutting off the water coming into your home. Call the city to check and if this is the case keep the water department's emergency number handy, so you'll be able to report problems quickly. If water is gushing and they can't come shut it off anyway!

13. Close garage door. If your garage is attached to your home, minimize the time your garage door is open. This will protect plumbing fixtures, such as water heaters, in your garage and pipes in the shared walls between the house and garage.

14. Minimize the time the door from the garage to the house is opened. If retrieving something from the garage close the door behind you. This will help to keep cold air out of your home.

15. Air inside the walls, where pipes are, can be much colder than air in the room. Set the thermostat at a reasonable temperature, 55 degrees or warmer, even if you will be away from home. Make sure you'll be able to keep your thermostat running continuously by keeping spare batteries on hand if your thermostat operates with batteries.

16. Change your furnace filter. Make sure your home can warm properly by replacing filters. Clogged filters are less efficient.

17. Keep bathroom and kitchen cabinet doors open to let warm air circulate around the pipes. If the power is out and temperature in your home falls below 55 degrees wrap the pipes under sinks.

18. Close your wood burning fireplace flue damper when you are not using it. Follow all manufacturer instructions for gas fireplaces including those with pilot lights, which may require the flue to be partial open at all times.

19. Clean gutters. Full gutters increase your chance of having ice form on your roof.

20. Inspect your attic. Proper attic ventilation is vital to preventing ice dams on your roof. Make sure there is no insulation blocking your soffits or attic vents.

21. Reverse the direction of your ceiling fans. Blades should be set to turn clockwise to circulate warm air from the ceiling down into the room.

22. Keep drapes and blinds closed, except when windows are in direct sunlight.

23. Install mylar blankets over windows. Tape the mylar blankets around windows by taping them over the molding creating an air pocket between the window glass and the blanket. You will be able to see out and light will come in, but it will greatly reduce the cold air coming thru the glass.

24. Cover or remove any window air conditioners.

25. If you have damage to your home Do Not dispose of any items without the prior approval of your insurance adjuster.