

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM



COLD WEATHER ADVISORY: YOUR PIPES AND WATER METER NEED PROTECTION TOO!

Is your water meter and home plumbing protected from the cold? If not, you could be creating a situation that may cause you unexpected inconvenience, frustration, and added expense. Iowa American Water says now is the time for homeowners to properly winterize their home plumbing system to avoid freezing. If you haven't already taken precautions...it's time to get busy!

Homeowners are responsible for taking steps to protect their water meter from freezing. Failure to do so can result in additional costs to replace a frozen meter. Iowa American Water offers these tips to help customers avoid the headaches and added expense that frozen water service lines and/or water meters can cause.

BEFORE COLD WEATHER SETS IN..

- Know what areas of your home, such as basements, crawl spaces, unheated rooms and outside walls are the most vulnerable to freezing.
- Make sure you and all your family members know where the main shut-off valve is--don't wait until a pipe bursts to begin searching for the valve. The main water valve is usually located along a basement wall next to the meter itself or where the water supply enters the building.
- Be careful when heating only a few rooms in your house. You may subject your water meter and pipes in unheated rooms to freezing temperatures.
- Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines by fixing broken windows, insulating walls, closing off crawl spaces and eliminating drafts near doors.
- Protect and insulate your pipes and water meter in unheated areas. Newspapers or rags will often work fine. Commercial insulating kits and heat tape can also be purchased. For outside meters, keep the lid to the meter pit closed tightly, and let any snow that falls cover it since snow acts as insulation.
- Don't forget pipes in cabinets next to exterior walls. If a sink is located against an outside wall, open the cabinet doors to allow heat to reach the water meter and pipes.

WHEN TEMPERATURES FALL BELOW ZERO...

- If you have pipes that are vulnerable to freezing, allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep the pipes from freezing. The cost of the extra water is low compare to the cost to repair a broken pipe or replacement a frozen meter.
- Open cabinet doors to expose pipes to warmer room temperatures to help keep them from freezing.

IF YOUR PIPES OR WATER METER FREEZE...

- Shut off the water immediately. Don't attempt to thaw frozen pipes unless the water is shut off. Freezing can often cause unseen cracks in pipes and joints.
- Open the cold water faucet nearest the frozen pipe. This relieves the pressure and allows the ice to expand down the length of the pipe reducing the chance of breakage.
- If your pipe is frozen, but has not burst, you can apply heat to it by either warming the air around the pipe or applying heat to the pipe itself. It is important that the water be shut off before attempting to thaw frozen water lines or meters.
- If you decide to thaw your pipe with heat, proceed with caution. If the pipe bursts as the water thaws, the electrical appliance you are using could get wet causing danger of electrocution. Never attempt to thaw a pipe with an open flame--danger of fire is too great! A hair dryer, space heater, steam, or exhaust from a vacuum cleaner work well.

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IF A PIPE BURSTS...

- Shut off the water immediately.
- If you have no water at all in your house, there is a possibility that the water meter is frozen. Oftentimes, the pipe freezes at the point where it comes out of the ground under your house, so check this first.
- If you need assistance, call Iowa American Water's 24-hour customer service line toll free at 1-866-641-2108.

WHEN YOU ARE AWAY...

- Have a friend, relative or neighbor regularly check your property to insure the heat is working and the pipes or meter have not frozen.
- A freeze alarm can be purchased for less than \$100 and will call a user-selected phone number if the inside temperature drops below 45 degrees.

A frozen water meter can lead to expensive home plumbing repairs and meter replacement charges as outlined in the table below. Act now to prevent cold weather from taking a bite out of your home plumbing and your wallet this winter.

Meter Size	Replacement Cost
5/8"	\$115
1"	\$165
1-1/2"	\$270
2"	\$325

For additional information, visit our website at www.amwater.com/iaaw. Our customer service center is also available to assist you 24 hours a day, call toll free to 1-866-641-2108.