



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Record Cold Temperatures Threaten to Cause Freezing Water Pipes

SLC Department of Public Utilities Advises Residents to Take Precautionary Measures to Prevent Water Pipes from Freezing

SALT LAKE CITY – Record low nighttime temperatures combined with below freezing daytime temperatures are leading to an increased number of freezing water service lines in the Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities service area.

To protect your service pipes from freezing, consider taking the following actions:

Inside plumbing

- **Insulate pipes in unheated areas** such as the crawl space, attic, garage, or basement. Use insulating tape or molded pipe sleeve and wrap it over the entire length of exposed pipe. Cover all valves, pipe-fittings, etc. with insulating tape or fiberglass.
- **Open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms.** Water lines supplying the kitchen or bathrooms are frequently located in outside walls. Any air leaks in siding or insulation can cause these pipes to freeze. Leaving the cupboard doors open when the temperature is below freezing allows pipes behind the cupboards to get more heat.
- **Let the water drip if you've had a history of freezing pipes.** A stream about the size of thin spaghetti should be sufficient. Faucets farthest from the street should be the ones left running. Using cold water will save on your gas or electric bill.

Outside plumbing

- **Caulk around pipes where they enter the house.** Close all foundation vents. (Open foundation vents are probably the greatest cause of frozen or split water lines). Cut wood or Styrofoam blocks to fit vent openings, and then slide them into the vents. Open the vents again in the spring to prevent dry rot.
- **Protect outside pipes and faucets.** In some homes, the outside faucet has a separate shut-off in the basement. If you have a separate valve for outside faucets, shut it off. Then go outside and turn on all the faucets to drain water in the lines. Leave the outside faucets on while you go back

and check your outside shut-off valve for a small brass plug or cap on the valve. Turn this plug far enough that water drains from the valve. Then, tighten the plug back and turn off all the outside faucets.

- **Wrap outside faucets or hose bibs.** Do this if you don't have a separate valve to turn off outside faucets. (Also remember to disconnect garden hoses.) Use newspaper or rags covered with plastic, fiberglass or molded foam insulating covers to wrap the faucet. (Molded foam insulating covers are available at plumbing and hardware stores.)
- **Drain in-ground sprinkler systems.** Check manufacturer's instructions for the best way to do this.

Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities is responsible for water lines from the main to the meter, and property owners are responsible for water lines from the meter to throughout the building.

“Most of the freezing that is being reported is occurring in pipes within homes,” said Department Director Jeff Niermeyer. “Taking preventative measures will reduce the chances of freezing pipes. It is much less expensive to prevent pipes from freezing than to have to call a plumber to fix broken or cracked lines,” added Niermeyer.

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