



Illinois American Water Offers Cold Weather Tips

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Belleville, Ill. — Illinois American Water reminds homeowners to safeguard their home plumbing to prevent water damage from frozen and burst pipes. Tips also address frozen water meters, which can bring costly plumbing repairs and replacement fees along with headaches and unexpected expense for homeowners.

“With winter weather on the way, now is the time for customers to take preventative steps to avoid frozen pipes and water meters. By following our cold weather tips, customers can help avoid damaged plumbing inside and outside the home,” said Mike Smyth, vice president of operations.

Illinois American Water encourages residents to take the following precautions when temperatures are consistently at or below freezing:

? Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines by repairing broken windows, insulating walls, closing off crawl spaces and eliminating drafts near doors.

? Know the location of your main water shut-off valve. If a pipe freezes or bursts, shut the water off immediately.

? Allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep pipes from freezing. The cost of the extra water is low compared to the cost to repair a broken pipe. Illinois American Water also encourages customers to capture the water for wise water use. The water can be used to water indoor plants and more.

? Open cabinet doors to expose pipes to warmer room temperatures to help keep them from freezing.

? Wrap exposed pipes with insulation or use electrical heat tracing wire; newspaper or fabric might also work.

? Keep the lid to the outside meter pit closed tightly and let any snow that falls cover it. Snow acts as insulation; do not disturb it.

If your pipes freeze:

? Shut off the water immediately. Do not attempt to thaw frozen pipes unless the water is shut off.

? Apply heat to the frozen pipe by warming the air around it, or by applying heat directly to a pipe. You can use a hair dryer, space heater or hot water. Don't leave space heaters unattended and avoid kerosene heaters or open flames.

? Once the pipes have thawed, turn the water back on slowly and check for cracks and leaks.

When you are away:

? Have a friend, relative or neighbor regularly check your property to ensure that the heat is working, and the pipes have not frozen.

? Also, a freeze alarm can be purchased and will call a user-selected phone number if the inside temperature drops below 45 degrees.

Illinois American Water also advises that sub-freezing temperatures can cause aging water mains to break and cause water to cover roadways. If you see a leak, your water service is disrupted or you experience low pressure, please contact the company's 24/7 customer service center at 800-422-2782 to report an emergency. For general inquiries, call between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

