

As Temperatures Drop, Illinois American Water Encourages Customers To Prepare For Cold Weather

by Karen Cotton

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ST. LOUIS - With colder weather arriving across the state, Illinois American Water is reminding homeowners to take steps to prevent water damage from frozen and burst pipes. Tips also cover frozen water meters, which can bring costly plumbing repairs and replacement fees along with headaches and unexpected expense to homeowners.

“With cold weather on the way, now is the time for customers to take preventative steps to avoid frozen pipes and water meters. Preparing now can help customers avoid damaged plumbing inside and outside of their homes,” said Beth Matthews, vice president of operations.

Before temperatures are below freezing customers should:

- **Check sprinkler or irrigation systems.** Make sure you have turned everything off and fully drained the systems.
- **Identify your home’s freezing points.** Check your home for pipes in areas that may be prone to freezing, such as crawl spaces, unheated rooms, basements, garages and exterior walls.
- **Know the location of the main water shut-off valve.** If a pipe freezes or bursts, shut off water immediately.
- **Protect your pipes and water meters.** Customers are encouraged to wrap exposed pipes with insulation or use electrical heat tracing wire; newspaper or fabric might also work. For outside meters, keep the lid to the meter pit closed tightly.

When temperatures stay below freezing customers should:

- **Prevent pipes from freezing.** Allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep pipes from freezing. Consider collecting the water for later use such as watering indoor plants and more. The cost of a short-term trickle is much less costly than a repair to a burst pipe.
- **Open cabinet doors to expose pipes.** Opening cabinet doors exposes pipes to warmer room temperatures to keep them from freezing.

If pipes freeze customers should:

- **Shut off the water immediately** and not attempt to thaw frozen pipes unless the water is shut off. Freezing can often cause unseen cracks in pipes or joints.
- **Apply heat to the frozen pipe by warming the air around it, or by applying heat directly to a pipe.** Customers can use a hair dryer, space heater or hot water. Space heaters should not be left unattended, and customers should avoid using kerosene heaters or open flames.
- **Once pipes have thawed, water should be turned on slowly and pipes should be checked for cracks and leaks.**

When customers are away, they should:

- **Have a friend, relative or neighbor regularly check their property** to ensure the heat is working and the pipes have not frozen.

- **Consider purchasing a freeze alarm.** The alarm will call a user-selected phone number if the inside temperature drops below 45 degrees.

Customers are also encouraged to ensure their contact information is up to date to receive important water service information should their service be impacted. Customers can manage their account online, report water emergencies and more at www.illinoisamwater.com. They can also call 800.422.2782 to update contact information.

About Illinois American Water

Illinois American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest investor-owned water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water and wastewater services to approximately 1.3 million people. American Water also operates a quality control and research laboratory in Belleville. With a history dating back to 1886, American Water is the largest and most geographically diverse U. S. publicly traded water and wastewater utility company. The company employs more than 6,400 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and regulated-like drinking water and wastewater services to more than 14 million people in 24 states. American Water provides safe, clean, affordable and reliable water services to our customers to help keep their lives flowing. For more information, visit amwater.com and diversityataw.com. Follow American Water on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).