

Illinois-American Provides Cold Weather Tips For Water Pipes

by Terry Macklin
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ALTON – With frigid temperatures occurring across the state, Illinois American Water is reminding homeowners and businesses to take steps to prevent frozen water pipes. These tips can also help protect the local water service team as they perform critical work for reliable, safe water service.

Customers should:

- Allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep pipes from freezing. Customers should 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.

Vice President of Operations Beth Matthews said, “These two tips are most important. They help residents keep their home plumbing safe, while also supporting our team in the field. Many times, when pipes freeze, customers will assume there is an issue with their water service and call our team to inspect. This can stretch the resources of team members who are working hard in the field to keep water flowing and keeping safety front of mind.”

If in-home 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. Use a hair dryer, space heater or hot water. Space heaters should not be left unattended. Avoid using kerosene heaters or open flames.
- Once pipes thaw, water should be turned on slowly and pipes should be checked for cracks and leaks. When customers are away from home, they should:
- Have someone regularly check their property to ensure the heat is working and the pipes have not frozen.
- Consider a freeze alarm. The alarm will call a user-selected phone number if the inside temperature drops below 45 degrees.

Other tips:

- Residents should keep snow cleared away from fire hydrants located near their residence. This can help local firefighters in the event of an emergency.