



Prepping Your Pipes

Central Texas has experienced several cold snaps that resulted in broken pipes and water damage across the region. As of press time, cold weather is still in the forecast. Learn about the problems that might arise if your pipes freeze and how to prevent this disaster from occurring in the future.

Those who live in Central Texas

are more often at risk of experiencing frozen pipes than those living in northern homes built with cold weather in mind.

Typically, Americans in southern zones are less aware of freezing problems, as they may only occur a few times during the season. This means pipes are left exposed to the weather, unprotected.

Regardless of where you live, you should be proactive in ensuring your pipes will hold up to the extreme cold that winter can bring. The IBHS reports that a frozen pipe can result in more than \$5,000 in water damage.

INSPECTING YOUR PIPES

Make sure your pipes are in good condition before the freezing weather arrives. If they have already experienced a blockage due to ice, you might notice swelling. These trouble spots have a greater chance of bursting if a freeze occurs again.

You can hire a local plumber to inspect your pipes and ensure a trouble-free winter. Make sure to ask where your home's main shut-off is in case trouble arises. Cutting off your water supply after a pipe bursts will lower the amount of damage you face.

PREPARING FOR MORE WINTER

Your professional plumber will point out at-risk areas and take proper measures to enhance their integrity. It can be as easy as applying heat tape or insulation on pipes that are exposed to the elements. This is especially important for unfinished basements and under structures such as a wooden deck.

Make sure to remove and drain

all outdoor hoses. Close the interior valves that supply water to outdoor faucets and open the outside valve to allow it to completely drain.

MORE HELPFUL TIPS & INFO

Even with proper maintenance, there are more strategies to utilize when freezing weather is present. The following tips come from the American Red Cross and can save you big bucks and headaches.

- *Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the pipes;*
- *Allow water to drip from faucets to keep pipes from freezing; and*
- *If you plan to leave for a long period of time, set the thermostat to at least 55 degrees.*
- *Water expands by 9% when frozen. The expansion is what bursts pipes.*
- *Disconnect outside water hoses, which are susceptible to bursting.*
- *Place a heat lamp in your well house and turn it on during cold weather.*

Frozen pipes are one of the biggest risks of property damage when the temperature drops, according to the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety.

If you don't have the skill or the time to do it yourself, call a professional plumber. The money you spend will be tiny compared to the cost of fixing a leak.

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