

Advice on Frozen Pipes

How can you help prevent the problem of frozen pipes?

To prevent problems, do what you can to protect the pipes inside and outside your house.

- Where possible ensure any outside pipes are insulated and if not insulated at least covered.
- For houses with their storage tanks in the attic, you should ensure that the area under the roof tank can get heat from underneath, so remove any insulation which prevents that. It may be useful to open the trap door to the attic to allow heat up there (only if safe to do so)
- It can also be useful to allow heat to circulate to under-sink pipes where they run along an outside wall by leaving a cupboard door open (only if safe to do so)

Useful advice if you have frozen pipes

Householders experiencing problems with frozen pipes are advised to contact their plumber.

If you have no water and you have confirmed with the Council that there is no problem with the mains supply in your area, it is likely that you have frozen pipes on your property or in your home.

It is critical to know where your stopcock is located in your property. If a leak becomes apparent then shut off the stopcock or alternative isolating valve that may be in your house to minimise potential damage.

If there is no water from the cold tap in your kitchen, the chances are that the stopcock or the line from there to the house is frozen. It may help to pour warm water over the stopcock - do not use boiling water for this purpose or any naked flame. Remember, however, that if water at any temperature builds up in the stopcock chamber it will almost certainly freeze within minutes: so use as little water as possible. If the freezing has occurred in the line between the stopcock and the house, the warm water is unlikely to solve the problem.

If you can identify the pipe that is frozen and it is above ground you may carry out the following to try to thaw it out:

- You may try to gently heat the pipe where you suspect the freeze has occurred. Alternatively, you could wrap a towel around the pipe securing it with duct tape and pour hot water over the towel.
- Once the obstruction is cleared and the water is flowing again, turn off all taps and check for leaks in the area where the obstruction occurred. Any leaks you find should be repaired immediately. If you cannot repair them yourself, call a qualified plumber.

Remember, if you have a burst pipe or frozen supply, to be careful about the use of heating systems, washing machines and other water-dependent appliances and facilities. If you have a problem or concern, contact a qualified plumber for advice.

Advice on Burst Pipes

Burst Pipes - Advice for Householders

Steps to take when you have a burst pipe emergency.

Burst Pipe Emergency

A burst pipe is classed as a water emergency - it can cause serious damage to your home's structure and electrical wiring. The following steps describe what you should do as soon as you discover a burst pipe:

1. Turn off the water supply. The stop cock is generally located underneath the sink. Make sure that you know where it is and leave the space around it free from household items to permit easy access.
2. Drain the system by turning on all your cold taps.
3. If water has been leaking through for some time and the ceilings are bulging please be careful as rooms may not be safe to enter. If you notice the leak quickly you can catch dripping water in buckets. Punch a hole in the ceiling to let water out if it starts to bulge.
4. Turn off water heating systems - switch off the central heating, immersion heater and any other water heating systems. If the central heating uses solid fuel, let this die out. Once water heating has shut down, turn on the hot taps to help drain the system.
5. Turn off the electrics - if water leaks near your electrics or electrical appliances, switch off the mains immediately. If it is wet, don't touch them!
6. Call a professional to repair the damage - electrical wiring damaged by water can be very dangerous - you will need to call in a professional if this happens.
7. Find a qualified and reliable plumber to repair the burst or frozen pipe(s)

To protect your home against unforeseen problems that can prove very expensive, you should ensure that you have appropriate insurance cover.

Remember, if you have a burst pipe or frozen supply, to be careful about the use of heating systems, washing machines and other water-dependent appliances and facilities.

If you have a problem or concern, contact a qualified plumber for advice.