



My Go-2-Guy Handyman Services

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Freezing Pipe Prevention

Winter started early than normal this year and according to the meteorologists it will be long and cold. This means frozen water pipes are a possibility.

Preventing pipes from freezing should be done at the time of construction, not after the pipes freeze but this is not a priority/concern of most renovators/flippers. Before it gets any colder take a moment to evaluate your water pipes. It's best to take the precautions now wherever possible so you don't have any costly repairs later.

Hopefully this information will give you some options for preventing your pipes from freezing.

As you likely know from back in grade, water has a unique property in that it expands as it freezes. This expansion puts tremendous pressure on whatever is containing it, including metal or plastic pipes. No matter the "strength" of the container, expanding water can cause pipes to break.

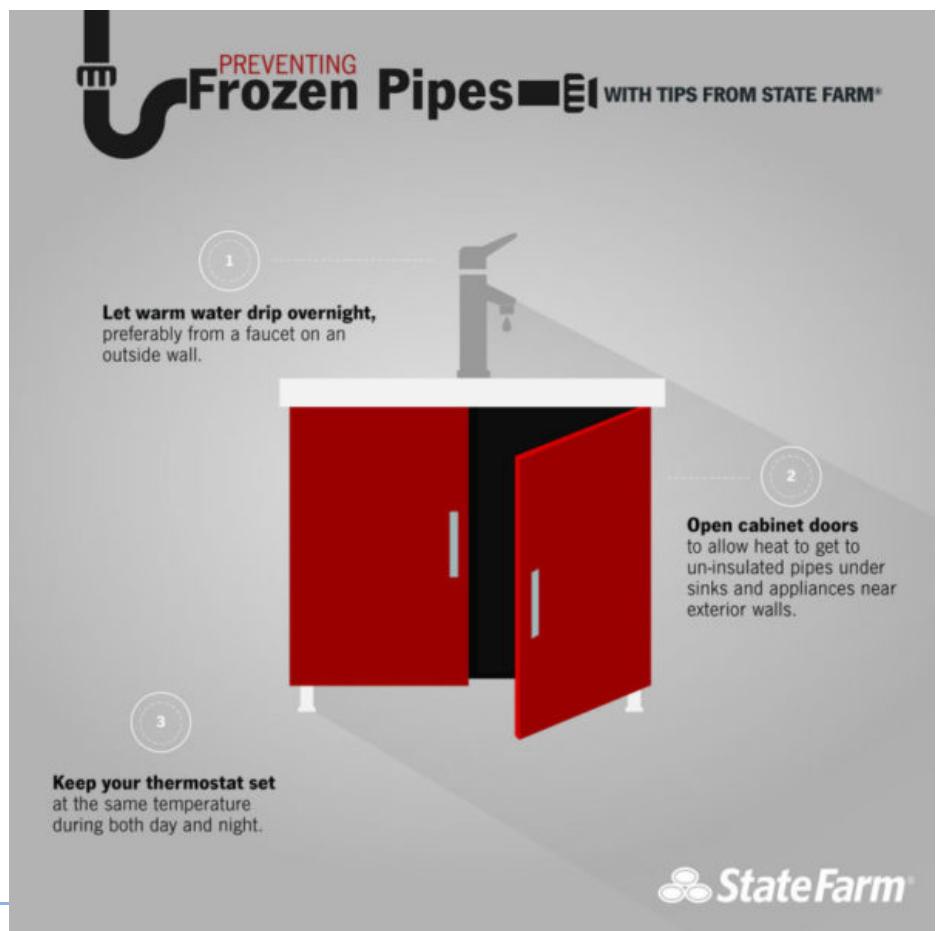
Pipes in your home that are most susceptible to freezing are:

- Water and heating pipes running along outside walls
- Pipes that run near basement walls or windows that have little or no insulation
- Outdoor hose bibs
- Water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements, crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen and bathroom cabinets

PREVENTION

1. Consider installing anti-freeze exterior faucets in the spring. These outdoor faucets have a long stem that extends through the house wall and controls a valve inside the house, away from the cold exterior wall. Water doesn't stand in the portion of the pipe or faucet outside the wall where it could freeze. Although these faucets don't need a shut off valve, but installing one is always a safer choice, and easily done when installing a new faucet.

2. A small pinhole or open joint air leak can cause frigid air to freeze an unprotected water pipe. Seal all penetration holes made from the installation of cable wires, phone wires, pipes, window leaks, framing leaks, etc. We suggest using either a quality sealant or expanding foam to seal the gap between your foundation walls and house siding as well as around all penetrations
3. No matter where you install it, insulation is a wise investment and can certainly make a difference in preventing pipes from freezing. The rim joist is the outer most section of your basement and is often not insulated. Insulating here helps prevent frozen pipes as well as the overall energy efficiency of your home. While doing this, ensure that all basement windows close tightly and the glass is intact. Repair or replace any window that doesn't.
4. Adding pipe insulation to your pipes is as incredibly simple but most homeowners don't understand how it works. Pipes do not burst because ice blockages radially expand and crack the sidewall. Rather, as the blockage grows, it pressures the water downstream thus eventually splitting the pipe. Insulation greatly increases the time it takes to cool a pipe to the freezing point and helps shelter them from breezes.
5. To prevent frozen pipes in the worst areas, wrap lines in heat tape, as well as quality pipe insulation. Focus on hot water pipes and u-bend connections. Pay special attention to the pipes closest to the exterior walls, crawl spaces or unheated areas
6. This one is "Old School." I remember as a kid when we experienced extreme cold snaps my mother would open the kitchen sink cabinet doors to expose heat to the pipes and she would also leave our faucets dripping to prevent the pipes from freezing. During freezing temperatures, for sinks against outside walls, leave the cabinet doors open. (6. continued pg. 3)



This allows warmer room air to circulate around pipes. Doing this, in conjunction with, setting the faucet to drip, will help prevent freezing.

7. Consider rerouting and insulating vulnerable water pipes next to basement windows, in non-insulated walls, or along basement rim joists can be relocated. Relocating these pipes further into the house, or installed in a warm interior wall will better protect them from freezing. This is best done when constructing the house or remodeling but can also be done afterward as a preventative measure.
8. Adding heat to unheated areas at risk of freezing can solve a lot of freeze issues. Many times bathroom and kitchen water lines are located in exterior walls or above an unheated space, will freeze. Adding a little extra heat to these spaces by using a localized space heater should do the trick.

If your pipes end up freezing, it's best to call your plumber as soon as possible, the faster they can remedy to situation the less water damage you will have. If you do not have a plumber you trust, Banwell Plumbing is a great choice. They are a father son team with years of experience. Tony the father worked with Mike Holmes during the early years of Holmes On Homes series and has been plumbing for over 25 years. Son Joseph is a licensed plumber that learnt from his dad.

We hope this information helps keep your faucets running and walls dry.