

News Release

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GREATER CINCINNATI
WATER WORKS

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Protect Against Frozen Pipes, Keep Bursts at Bay

Cincinnati, OH – Tis' the season of snow and ice, frigid temperatures and the potential for frozen pipes. "When temperatures hover in the teens or drop to single digits for an extended period of time it puts a strain on your plumbing system, which can weaken pipes and cause breaks," says Dave Bennett, Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) Field Services Manager.

To help protect residents and business owners from the expense and headache of dealing with frozen pipes, GCWW has a few tips to help keep the bursts at bay:

- **Seal cracks:** caulk around door frames and windows to reduce incoming cold air. Winter winds whistling through overlooked openings can quickly freeze exposed water pipes.
- **Open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms:** Water lines supplying these rooms are frequently on outside walls. Leaving the doors open when the temperature is below freezing allows them to get more heat.
- **Let faucets drip in below-freezing weather:** This will help keep an even flow of water moving through your internal plumbing system and prevent freezing.
- **Protect outdoor pipes and faucets:** In some homes, the outside faucet has its own shut-off in the basement in addition to the shut-off valve for the entire house. If you have a separate valve for outside faucets, close the valve, remove hoses and drain the faucet. If you don't have a separate valve, wrap the outside faucets (hose bibs) in newspapers or rags covered with plastic.
- **Insulate indoor pipes or faucets in unheated areas:** pipes in internal unheated areas such as the garage or crawl space under the house should be wrapped with insulated foam to prevent freezing. Wrap the entire length of the exposed pipe and cover all valves and pipe fittings.

"Insulated foam is easy to use and can be found at your local hardware or building supply store," adds Bennett. But he warns against using electrical heat tape. "Heat tape can be problematic because if it's used improperly it can potentially cause a fire."

If your pipes do freeze and you can pinpoint the location of the freeze, Bennett suggests waving a hairdryer back and forth to apply slow steady heat to return water flow. "Applying heat to the general area instead of one spot will allow the pipe to slowly heat up and prevent it from bursting. Never use an open flame, which could cause a fire," he says.

For more information, residents and business owners can contact GCWW's customer service division at 513-591-7700.

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