



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Preventing Frozen Water Pipes in Cold Weather

As the coldest months of the year set in, the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission is reminding the public to take steps to prevent frozen water pipes in homes and businesses. In cold weather, water pipes can freeze and burst, causing damage to properties and disrupting the lives of residents. Below are steps residents can take to prevent frozen water pipes:

Indoors:

- Maintain heat at 55 degrees minimum (including in the basement).
- Avoid drafts where the water meter and exposed pipes are located.
- Insulate pipes that are located in cold and drafty places in the home.

Outdoors:

- Disconnect hoses.
- Shut off faucets from inside the basement and drain the faucets.

In Extreme Cold:

- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to reach water pipes.
- Some customers choose to run cold water faucets constantly (with a water stream the size of a pencil lead). This may help if your service has a history of freezing.

Be Prepared:

- Find the master shutoff valve. It may be near the water heater, washing machine, or where the water service pipe enters the house from the street. If a pipe bursts anywhere in the house, this valve will turn the water flow off. Make sure everyone in the residence knows where this valve is located.
- Have a plumber's number handy, in case of an unexpected emergency.



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If a Pipe is Frozen:

- NEVER use a torch or flame to try to thaw a frozen pipe.
- If attempting to thaw the pipe yourself, the best tool is a hair dryer on a low setting – wave back and forth over the pipe.
- When thawing pipes, be mindful that they may already be broken and may start to leak once they begin to thaw. Be ready to run to the shutoff valve.
- SWSC customers can contact the Commission at 413-310-3501 anytime – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Information about preventing frozen water pipes is also available on the Commission's website, <http://waterandsewer.org/education-and-community/preventing-frozen-water-pipes/>.

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