



For Immediate Release
February 18, 2015

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City Reminds Residents to Protect Pipes

Harrisonburg, VA – Harrisonburg’s Public Utilities Department has received an increase in calls for frozen water meters and reminds the community of precautions to take to protect pipes in homes and businesses.

With the significantly low temperatures, the Public Utilities Department has responded to what customers think is a frozen water meter and ends up being frozen pipes on the customer’s end of the meter. After the pipes freeze, they can burst which causes the customers high repair bills and quite a mess.

Ways to Prevent Pipes from Freezing

- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing.
- When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55 degrees.
- Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors. Close inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs. Open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain.
- Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located in unheated areas. Look in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under the kitchen and bathroom cabinets.
- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes like a pipe sleeve or installing UL-listed heat tape, heat cable, or similar materials on exposed water pipes.

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To Thaw Frozen Pipes

- If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Places likely for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.
- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable space heater (kept away from flammable materials), or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device.
- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible, or if you can not thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.

To learn more tips from the City of Harrisonburg on ways to protect yourself and your home during the cold winter months, visit www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/winter-safety.

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