



## PREVENTING FROZEN PIPES

Frozen pipes can present an invisible threat that you might not recognize until it's too late. When water freezes in a water pipe system, it typically expands 10% or more. This can cause blockages in the pipe and in some instances, cause pipes to crack or burst leading to water damage and costly repairs.

### Which Pipes Are Most at Risk?

- Water pipes in unheated, interior locations such as basements, crawl spaces, attics and outdoor buildings.
- Fire sprinkler rooms, mechanical rooms, isolated rooms or unoccupied rooms.
- Outdoor hose hookups and faucets.
- Lawn sprinkler lines.
- Wet water fire sprinklers.

### Preventing Frozen Pipes Before Winter:

- Check buildings for areas where water pipes are located in unheated or poorly insulated areas.
- Be sure to check cabinets that may contain uninsulated plumbing.
- Make sure any insulation that has been removed for maintenance work has been reinstalled.
- Make sure all dry wall has been repaired or reinstalled after construction work or repairs.
- Find air gaps in attic spaces and seal them.
- Ensure hot and cold water pipes are insulated.
- Consider utilizing pipe sleeves or UL approved heat tape/heat trace on water lines and sprinkler systems.
- Ensure back up generators are being tested monthly.
- Inspect and maintain all sprinkler systems in accordance to NFPA 13 codes.
- NFPA 13 requires that wet sprinkler pipes should be maintained at or above 40 degrees. If pipes are not maintained at this temperature, consider the use of heat trace combined with insulation and weatherproof jackets.
- Have spare parts available for heating units to ensure they will function properly when cold weather strikes.
- Prior to a water emergency, ensure you have fans, wet vacs and squeegee tools available to help mitigate water damage.

### Preventing Frozen Pipes During Winter:

- Monitor your local weather and know when temperatures are expected to drop below freezing.
- Maintain adequate heat in all buildings.
- Monitor thermostats to ensure employees have not turned thermostats too low. Keep heat in buildings set at a minimum of 55 degrees.
- Open cabinets to allow heat flow to water pipes.
- If necessary, turn on faucets and allow them drip slowly. This is especially true for pipes located on outside walls.
- Disconnect all outside water hoses from the faucets.
- Ensure maintenance personnel are performing regular maintenance checks in all buildings during extreme cold weather conditions.
- Make sure adequate heat is provided in riser rooms/sprinkler valve rooms.

## WORKERS' SAFETY IN WINTER WEATHER

Extreme cold weather can cause a number of health problems for employees during the winter months. Hypothermia and frostbite are just two conditions that may affect workers if the proper precautions are not taken.

Hypothermia occurs when a person's core body temperature drops below 95°F. The condition is considered mild if a person's core temperature is between 90 and 95°F. A person with mild hypothermia may show signs of uncontrollable shivering, loss of dexterity, pale and cool skin and incoherence. A person suffering from severe hypothermia may show signs of their heart rate and blood pressure dropping. They may also show signs of slurred speech, confusion, shallow breathing and irregular heartbeat.

Frostbite is frozen and sometimes dead tissue that is caused by prolonged exposure to cold temperatures, usually below freezing. Your extremities (ears, nose, fingers, hands, toes & feet) are most often affected because the body reduces blood flow to them in an effort to maintain its core temperature. Frostbite usually causes the skin to look pale or blue. In extreme cases, the skin may turn black. The skin will generally feel cold and numb, and may be either stiff or rubbery. Severe frostbite may cause blisters to form.

### Treating for Hypothermia:

- Move the worker to a warm, dry environment.
- Cover their head and neck with extra clothing or blankets to trap in their body heat.
- Give the worker high-energy foods and warm liquids that do not contain caffeine or alcohol.
- Keep the victim conscious.

### Treating for Frostbite:

- Do not rub frostbite areas. You could cause more damage.
- Move the worker to a warm, dry area.
- Submerge the affected area in warm water (100 to 104°F) until it becomes red.
- If the affected area is severe, consult a physician as soon as possible.

### Dressing & Eating for Extreme Cold Weather:

- Dress in layers, including a hat, gloves and insulated boots.
- Stay dry to avoid hypothermia.
- Nutrition is a critical part of combating hypothermia. The body needs food to sustain its core temperature. Eat complex carbohydrates.
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.



## AMERICAN HEART MONTH

February is American Heart Month, which is a great time to discuss the importance of heart health in the workplace. There is also a specific day in February that focuses on hearts—Valentine's Day. To incorporate some positivity into your toolbox talk, why not accompany your topic with a sweet treat like heart-shaped strawberries as a segue to the importance of eating right for heart health.

Having your employees in the best possible health is not only good for the employee but it's also important for your company's bottom line. Use a toolbox talk to highlight all the things you can do to keep your employees in good health.

First, start with an overview of the symptoms of heart disease to watch for like chest pain, jaw, neck or arm pain, breathlessness, weakness, fatigue, and loss of consciousness. Unfortunately, heart conditions don't always show symptoms—reiterating the importance of regular screenings of blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, and body weight is the best prevention of cardiovascular disease. Think about all the contributing factors to heart health like high-pressure situations that cause stress, manual labor that causes physical stress to the heart, and respiratory hazards and demonstrate how those situations can be avoided while working.

Then discuss all of the prevention measures your employees can take like a healthy diet, exercise program and workplace safety guidelines like wearing the right Personal Protective Equipment around chemicals.

## SAFETY DATA SHEET BOOK

OSHA requires a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) book to be immediately available to all employees as part of their "Right To Know" compliance. From time to time, you must update your SDS Book when a new product is purchased or an existing one is updated. Also, occasionally, you may find a sheet missing or damaged. So, how do you get a new one. If you remember who you purchased the product from, you can request a new SDS. But you might consider a quick and immediate solution. Go to [msds.com](https://www.msds.com) and do a search for your product, select it, copy it, and place it into your SDS Book. Voila! You are now compliant with OSHA requirements and your employees have critical emergency response information that is current!

This site has been available for quite a long time and is free for limited use as described. Hope this helps you and your County be a little safer!



## FEBRUARY 2023 QUIZ

### TRUE or FALSE

1. It's not important to check attic spaces for adequate insulation prior to cold weather.
2. If an employee is suffering from hypothermia, give them large amounts of coffee to warm them up.
3. During freezing conditions, its important for maintenance personnel to monitor the temperature of all buildings.
4. When your department receives a new chemical, you don't need to update the SDS Book.
5. High blood pressure is not heart health concern.

### Answers

1. False 2. False 3. True 4. False 5. False

**American  
Heart  
Month**



*February*