

## **Woodhaven HOA Report on January 2024 Freeze Damages**

Six units sustained damage from freezing and bursting pipes in the January 2024 severe freeze event. All instances occurred in laundry rooms, with 4 of the 6 being in outside laundry rooms. One unit is on the second level and the other 5 are on the ground level. Buildings affected were 1 (2 units), 2 (1 unit), 5 (2 units) and 8 (1 unit).

We identified areas in the laundry room where we could put additional insulation to help reduce the probability of future freezing pipes. On the exterior walls, which are framed with 2"x4" studs, we placed rigid foam board insulation and fiberglass batt insulation. The repaired pipes were wrapped with thicker insulation. We have achieved an R-Value of somewhere around R-20 in the exterior laundry room wall, which is about as high as can be achieved. While the laundry room walls were opened up, we reconfigured the dedicated pipes (hot and cold) that serve the water supply to the washing machine. Primarily, we eliminated the unnecessary bends in the pipes which is where water tends to collect.

It should be noted that there are "common" pipes in the buildings and "dedicated" pipes in the buildings. A pipe is considered "common" if it serves more than one unit. A pipe is considered "dedicated" if it only serves a particular unit. This is an important distinction to pay attention to. The HOA is responsible for repairing "common" pipes. The owner is responsible for repairing "dedicated" pipes. An example of a "dedicated" pipe is the pipe from the water heater to all the interior faucets, including the hot water supply pipe to the washing machine. Another "dedicated" pipe example would be at the point (usually a Tee off the "common" cold water pipe) where the "common" pipe splits off to serve a particular unit (such as the cold-water supply to the washing machine or all the interior faucets and toilet). So, the first thing we have to determine when there is a leaking pipe, is it a "common" pipe or a "dedicated" pipe. We feel very strongly that all owners should have a sufficient amount of Homeowners Insurance (building, contents, general liability) in case a leaking pipe is a "dedicated" pipe, as they are responsible for all repairs and damages, including to all other units damaged by that leak. We have examples in this complex of a leaking water heater causing damages in multiple units costing thousands of dollars in repairs. Additionally, it should be noted that regardless of which type of pipe is at fault ("dedicated" or "common"), damage to floor coverings, furnishings, etc. are the responsibility of the owner.

We are also continuing to pursue solutions to our freezing pipes from professionals, primarily plumbers and engineers. There are a handful of possible solutions and they all have their own advantages and disadvantages (effectiveness, safety, access, maintenance requirements, life of product, installation costs, etc.). It should also be noted that none of the professionals or firms we have contacted for solutions will guarantee that their solution works. Adding to the complexity, there doesn't seem to be a consensus on which solutions are best for our situation. It appears that the different building and laundry room types may require different solutions. We are hoping to install at least one of these solutions on a test basis to a few units that have had freezing and bursting pipes in 2 or 3 of the 3 latest severe freeze events.

Our February 2021 severe freeze event resulted in 60 units plus the office with freezing and bursting pipes. Our December 2022 severe freeze event resulted in 23 units with freezing and bursting pipes. This latest severe freeze event resulted in 6 units with freezing and bursting pipes, so we are making progress. We still believe the most effective solution is following the HOA's "Winter Weather Tips" and continuing to be vigilant when a severe freeze event is forecasted. Having said that, we are still subject to Mother Nature's whims and the effects of climate change (whether natural or man-made). Texas infrastructure (homes, apartments, condominiums, roads, power plants, gas supply, electrical lines, etc.) were not built for this type of severe weather.