

## WHY IS PIPE FREEZING A PROBLEM?

Water is unique in that it expands as it freezes. This expansion puts tremendous pressure on whatever is containing it, including metal or plastic pipes. Pipes in unheated interior area, especially those that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation, are subject to freezing.

## TIPS AND TRICKS TO PREVENT FROZEN PIPES AND METERS

Did you know that pipes can freeze as soon as the temperature reaches 31° F because the temperature is below the freezing point of water? Follow these guidelines to help minimize the risk of damage to your property:

- Remove, drain, and properly store outdoor hoses.
- Close inside valves to outdoor hose bibs. Keep outside valves open so any remaining water in the pipe can expand without breaking the pipe.
- Check around your home for other areas where water supply lines are located in unheated areas. Look in basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. In these areas, both hot and cold water pipes should be insulated.
- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes, like heat tape. In some cases, using blankets and towels can help insulate the line.
- Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines. Fix drafty windows and plug drafts around doors.
- Check the condition of the skirting around manufactured homes, closing any openings found.
- Keep garage doors closed if there are water lines in the garage.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around plumbing.
- Keep water moving through exposed pipes by allowing a small trickle of cold water to run. By running a trickle of cold water, you may incur a higher bill, but you may prevent a costly repair of frozen pipes and/or a frozen meter.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave your heat on and set to no lower than 55 degrees.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PIPES FREEZE

If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, or no water at all, suspect a frozen pipe. Check for frozen pipes anywhere pipes are near exterior walls or where your water service enters your home.

- Keep your faucet open – as you treat the frozen pipe, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through will help with melting the ice.
- Thaw pipes gradually and evenly to prevent damage to the pipe.
- Carefully apply heat to the section of the pipe using an electric heating pad, hair dryer, portable space heater or towels soaked in hot water. **DO NOT USE A BLOW TORCH, KEROSENE OR PROPANE HEATER, OR OTHER OPEN FLAME DEVICES.**
- Continue to apply heat until full water pressure is restored.
- If you need assistance, consider hiring a plumber.
- If your meter is leaking, frozen, or cracked on the bottom – call Marshalltown Water Works at 641-753-7913 to have a technician replace the meter. Charges may apply.
- Be aware that pipes may already be broken due to freezing, and be prepared to shut off at the valve after the meter in case thawed pipes begin to leak.