



**CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cold Winter Weather Can Freeze Water Service Lines

Northampton water service customers should be aware that the cold winter weather can cause water service lines to freeze and burst causing damage to property. When temperatures are below freezing water pipes and meters that are exposed to cold air may freeze. Property owners are reminded to protect both water pipes and their water meter from freezing in order avoid unnecessary and expensive repairs. Preventing pipes and meters from freezing is the best way to avoid property damage.

Here are some simple steps you can take to prevent your service and indoor water pipes from freezing:

Provide warmth to the water pipes:

- Eliminate cold air near water pipes.
- Tightly close doors and windows to the outside and eliminate drafts from crawl spaces.
- Turn off water to garden hose connections at an inside valve and drain the exposed piping before freezing temperatures set in.
- Open the door to the room where the pipes are located to allow warm air to circulate.
- Place a lighted bulb near water pipes. (Never use open flames.)
- Wrap pipes in insulation or heat tape.
- Open the cabinet door below the sink to allow warm air to reach the pipes.

Make frequent use of your water supply:

- Flowing water can prevent ice from forming.
- When outside temperatures remain below freezing, it's less expensive to run your faucet regularly than for you to repair a frozen or burst pipe.

What to do if pipes freeze?

If no water comes from your faucets when you turn them on, most likely the pipes nearest a wall, door, window, or along the floor are frozen:

- Start by opening a faucet near the frozen pipe to release any vapor from the melting ice and so that you'll know when the water starts flowing again.
- Begin warming the pipes nearest the faucet and work toward the frozen section.
- Blow warm air on the pipe using a hair dryer. (Do not leave the dryer unattended or allow it to overheat.)
- Once water has begun to flow again, let a pencil-sized stream of water flow through the faucet until normal heating is restored to the area.
- Eliminate cold drafts and allow warm air to circulate around the pipes to prevent freezing again.

Be Prepared

- Locate the master shutoff valve to your property. If a pipe bursts in your home or business this valve will turn the water flow off.

Meters need protection too!

It is colder near the floor of a basement than at the ceiling, so make sure warm air is allowed to circulate around your meter. Follow the previous instructions about preventing frozen water pipes. If your meter is in a separate room, leave the door open to this room to allow warmth to circulate. If your meter is in a cabinet, open the cabinet door. If the meter is in an outdoor pit, check to see that the cover fits properly and that it has no cracks into which cold wind can blow. The pipes, valves and the meter inside such pits should not touch the concrete walls.

If you suspect damage to water pipes or the water meter, call the Water Division on business days from 7 am to 3:00 pm at 413-587-1097. Water emergencies after these hours should be reported to 413-587-1100 immediately.