

Chesterfield County, Virginia

How to Avoid Frozen Pipes



Cold Weather Plumbing Tips From the
Chesterfield County Department of Utilities



Department of Utilities
804-748-1310

Avoiding Frozen Pipes

- As temperatures reach freezing, close all air vents and other openings in the crawl space under your house.
(Note: Monitor temperature, and open one or two vents in warmer weather for ventilation.)
- In freezing weather, never set your home's thermostat below 55 degrees.
- Insulate pipes that are prone to freezing, such as those near an outside wall, in unheated areas of your home, or that are exposed, such as outside spigots. In an emergency, several layers of newspapers or rags can be used for temporary insulation.
- Keep the cover to your water meter box securely in place to prevent the meter from freezing during cold periods.
- In extremely cold weather, leave cabinet doors under sinks open to keep warm air circulating.
- If temperatures are expected to fall below 20 degrees, leave water dripping slowly from faucets.
- Locate your home's master valve so you can shut off the water temporarily if a line does break. The master valve is typically located where the water line from the meter enters the house. This can be in the crawl space under your house or in the utility room near the hot-water tank or clothes washer.

If Your Pipes Freeze

- Open the cold-water faucet nearest the freeze to relieve pressure and reduce the likelihood of breakage.
- Use a hair dryer set on low, heat lamp or light bulb to gradually warm and thaw the frozen pipe. Too much heat in one spot, however, can burst the pipe, so be sure heat is evenly distributed over a large area of the pipe. Be extremely cautious when using any electrical appliance to thaw a pipe. The appliance could become wet, increasing the danger of electrocution.
- DO NOT use a blow torch or any type of flame to thaw a frozen line. In addition to the danger of fire, extreme heat could thaw the pipe too rapidly, causing it to burst and resulting in potential injury.
- All water plumbing lines on the customer's side of the water meter box are the property owner's responsibility. If there is a problem, contact a plumber.
- If you cannot locate the freeze and no water is coming out of any tap, there is a chance that your service line or your meter is frozen. Call Chesterfield Utilities weekdays from 7:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. at 748-1310 and request someone to check your meter. After business hours or on weekends, call 744-1360. Please be patient during inclement weather as there are probably many other customers in the same situation.

Chesterfield County Department of Utilities
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www.chesterfield.gov/utilities
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