

Take time to prevent pipes from freezing

Frigid temperatures can cause one of winter's worst woes – frozen water pipes.

Property owners and residents can take some simple precautions to prevent the inconvenience and expense of frozen water pipes.

Here are recommendations from Placer County:

Insulate pipes and faucets outdoors and in unheated areas. Wrap pipes with pipe-insulating material, which is available at hardware and plumbing supply store, or use insulation. Be sure to protect all pipes in unheated areas, such as crawl spaces and garages.

Do not attempt to put anti-freeze into any water pipes. Antifreeze is toxic to humans, pets, wildlife and landscaping and is harmful to the environment. Antifreeze shouldn't be used unless specifically called for by a manufacturer.

Make sure you know the location of your master water shut-off valve. The frozen pipe may already be broken and will leak when the water is thawed. In this case, you will need to shut off the water in your home or business until the leaking pipe is fixed.

Thawing frozen pipes. If you locate the frozen section of pipe and try to thaw it yourself, be sure to take the following precautions to protect yourself and your property.

- Do not use a torch with an open flame.
- Open the faucet first. Start by warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible working toward the coldest section of the pipe. Water running through the

pipe will help to melt the ice in the pipe.

- Place a warm towel or rag around the pipe. Pour hot water over the cloth. Repeat several times until the pipe is unfrozen.
- If water is not available, you may use a hair dryer but be careful to avoid getting it wet causing a shock.