

During extremely cold temperatures, water pipes are at risk for freezing. When this happens, they can burst due to the pressure of ice expanding inside the pipes and cause extensive damage to the property as well as a great inconvenience for you.

When very cold temperatures are in the forecast or upon us, i.e., single digit or lower temperatures or wind chill factors, take the following precautions to mitigate risk and damage:

1. Bump up the thermostat so that the areas farthest from the registers are also getting enough warm air to keep pipes from freezing. IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE AWAY FROM THE PROPERTY, i.e., during Christmas vacation and you know it is going to get colder, leave the thermostat on a bit higher, i.e., 70 degrees, and have a friend or neighbor check on the property. Also, shut OFF the main water line so that if pipes were to freeze, water will not be running everywhere while you are away from the property.
2. Ensure that the registers in the garage are open so some heat is getting to the garage. This is especially important for bathrooms that are located above or near the garage as those pipes are at risk of freezing. If you have a space heater, put it out in the garage and turn it on during the coldest days to prevent freezing pipes. You can also crack the door open that goes into the house to help push more warm air into the garage.
3. Keep the car garage doors closed as much as possible. Do not leave them open after you drive in or out of the garage, etc. Pipes in the garage walls and ceilings can freeze in a matter of minutes when you allow cold air and wind to blow into the garage from these large openings. If you are moving in the winter months and it is a really cold day, you are going to need to emphasize this precaution with the moving company.
4. For plumbing that is on the external walls, i.e., sink faucet located on an external wall, open the cabinet doors under the vanity to allow warm air to circulate around the drains and supply lines. It also helps to let the water trickle to keep the lines open where temperatures are hard to maintain. And you can warm these rooms with a space heater as well if you have one.
5. Double check to make sure you do not have any hoses attached to an outdoor water spigot. If so, remove it at once and do not put it back on until freezing temps are behind us.
6. Report malfunctioning of furnaces as soon as you can. Unfortunately, HVAC companies do not work all hours of the day and tend to have multiple customers to get to, but the sooner we know the better. Check the troubleshooting guide to make sure it is not something simple, i.e., the filter is too heavy and restricting air flow, batteries need replacing in thermostat, breaker tripped, etc. If your home has a fireplace, **USE** it when the furnace is not working to keep the house as warm as possible until the repairman arrives.