

Tips to Avoid Pipes Freezing

Cold temperatures can cause water pipes to freeze. Freezing in a pipe creates a lot of pressure inside the pipe and can cause the pipe to burst and likely lead to serious flooding, especially when there's no one around to turn off the water. The best prevention against frozen pipes is to keep them warm enough to stay above the freezing point. You can do this with any one of six simple steps or, better still, a combination of measures.

Tip #1: Keep the Heat On

If you or your tenants are leaving for a long period of time, make sure that the heat is kept on in your property. It may be difficult to convince your tenants to leave their heat on when they are away, especially if they are responsible for paying their own utility bills. You should inform them that the heat can help prevent pipes from freezing, and if pipes freeze and burst, it can cause a lot of water damage to the property and to their possessions.

The heat does not have to be kept as high as you normally would keep it if you were actually in the property, but keeping it set above 50 F is a good idea. This should provide enough heat to keep the pipes warm and to prevent any water inside from freezing.

Tip #2: Allow the Faucet to Drip

If you are afraid a pipe will freeze, you can open the faucet fed by that pipe just a bit so the faucet drips slightly. Allowing the faucet to be open like this relieves pressure in the system. If a pipe freezes, it is actually the pressure that is created between the blockage and the faucet that will cause the pipe to burst. Allowing the faucet to be open will prevent this pressure from building up and thus keep the pipe from bursting. If the faucet is served by both hot and cold water pipes, open both faucet taps slightly, or set a single-handle faucet (such as a kitchen faucet) to warm.

Tip #3: Keep Interior Doors Open

Pipes are often located in cabinets. When the temperature drops, it is a good idea to keep these cabinet doors open so that the heat from the rest of the house can keep the pipes warm as well. You should also keep all interior doors open so that the heat can flow throughout the home.