



## COLBURN GROUP I N S U R A N C E

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Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at Colburn Group.

# Prevent frozen pipes & ice damming

As the temperature drops, pipes that are exposed to the cold are prone to freeze. This is especially true if they are located in unheated areas like basements, crawl spaces, attics and garages. Pipes that run along poorly insulated exterior walls can also be affected by the extremes in temperature.

The continued freezing and then thawing of these pipes can cause the metal to become weakened and break. Water damage caused by burst pipes can result in toxic mold. If the damage isn't repaired correctly, or isn't repaired soon enough, it can cause a build-up of mold inside the walls that can make a house uninhabitable

Prevent costly repairs by following these tips:

- Install adequate insulation in outside walls that have pipes running along side them, under the floors above the basement, and above the attic ceiling. Inexpensive foam insulation is available at most home-improvement centers.
- Disconnect outside hoses, wrap faucets and cover them with plastic or faucet covers.
- Open the cabinet doors under your sinks during extreme cold weather to allow warm air to get in.
- Cover crawl space vents when temperatures dip to 20 or below. Remember to uncover vents when the weather warms up.
- Seal foundation cracks in crawlspaces that could let cold air in that will cause pipes to freeze.
- At 20 degrees or less, turn on a small but steady stream of cold water at the inside faucet farthest from the water meter.

If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle of water comes out, the pipe is probably frozen. Here are some things you can do to thaw the pipe safely.

- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt more ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of the pipe that is frozen by using either an electric heating pad that is wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable electric space heater, or by wrapping the pipe in towels that have been

soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device. A blowtorch can make water in a frozen pipe boil and cause it to explode

- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is inaccessible, or if you cannot thaw the frozen area, call a licensed plumber.
- Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may too.
- If your pipes break, shut off your water using the hand valve. If you cannot get the water turned off, call a licensed plumber.



Ice damming occurs when snow on your roof melts and refreezes over unheated areas, such as the edges of the roof, attached porches & garages. This can cause water leakage when the snow above the ice dam melts or it rains but the ice below prevents proper drainage creating a back up of water. If enough water collects, it will back up under the shingles and leak into the eaves or into the walls of your house.

### Preventing & Controlling Ice Damming

- Proper insulation and attic ventilation help prevent the attic temperature from rising above the freezing point.
- Heating cables on your roof if installed properly can also help prevent ice damming.

### When signs of ice damming occur

- Contact a licensed roofer to clear the snow off the roof and break up any ice to prevent water infiltration into your home.