

KUB Winter Weather Tips – January 7, 2014

Water pipes that freeze and burst can cause thousands of dollars in damage to your home. Here's how to minimize your risk:

- Insulate pipes in crawl spaces, in attics, and near outer walls.
- Open cabinet doors under sinks and vanities to let warm air in. If you have reason to be especially concerned (if your pipes have frozen before, for example), you may also want to let hot and cold water faucets trickle into an open drain overnight.
- Cover outside faucets and disconnect hoses.
- Close outside vents when nighttime temperatures fall below 32 degrees.
- Know where your water cut-off is and operate it several times yearly. Make sure it is properly marked and in good working condition.

Before going out of town, take these steps:

- Keep your thermostat set no lower than 55 degrees.
- Turn off your water valve to prevent damage if the pipes burst.
- Arrange for someone to check your home or building to make sure the heat is on.

If your pipes freeze:

- Shut the water off immediately. If the water is on when frozen pipes thaw out, water that collected behind the ice will shoot out of the ruptured pipes into your home.
- Never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch. Use a hairdryer instead.
- Be careful of electrical shock in areas of standing water or dampness.
- Contact a licensed plumbing contractor if you are unsure that you can safely make repairs to your frozen pipes.

KUB recommends keeping your thermostat at a maximum of 68 degrees. Each degree change saves 1 percent on your heating bill. Instead of reaching for the thermostat, add another layer at home and grab an extra blanket to help stay warm.

Be prepared for storm season and the potential for power outages. Keep emergency supplies on hand such as batteries, flashlights, a battery-operated radio, nonperishable food items, bottled water, and a cell phone or single line phone (cordless phones don't work without electricity).

If you experience an outage, contact KUB at 524-2911 to report the outage. Visit www.kub.org for more tips on staying warm in the winter.