HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

IF THE HEAT GOES OFF

How to prevent frozen pipes – for do-it-yourself repairs

If you are temporarily without heat in the winter, or if you will be leaving your home for an extended period of time, there are several things you can do to keep your tanks and pipes from freezing – and prevent expensive repair bills:

DRAIN YOUR SYSTEM

1. Turn off your water at the main valve (located at the water meter, which is usually at the front wall of the basement near the floor).
2. Open all faucets (including any on the outside of your house).
3. Flush all toilets till empty. Purchase nontoxic recreational vehicle antifreeze at an auto parts store or home center. Add 1/4 gallon RV antifreeze to the remaining water in the top tank of each toilet, and another 1/2 gallon to the bottom bowl.
4. Turn off the gas to your hot water tank and drain it. The drain valve is located near the bottom of the tank.
5. If you have a boiler, drain the system:
   a. First, take off the vents by each radiator – some are silver and cone-shaped – if you have a single-pipe steam system.
   b. Then, open all drains on the boiler (for either a hot water or steam system).
   c. If your boiler system has a condensation tank up in the rafters near the boiler, drain it, too.
6. Drain any water conditioning units you may have.
7. Put 1/4 gallon of RV antifreeze in each drain trap (all sinks, tubs, floor drains, etc.).

HOW WELL THIS WORKS

These procedures will remove 80–90% of the water from your system. There is still a slight possibility that some water may remain, but this will greatly reduce the risk of freeze damage.

Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

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