

Keep Your Water Pipes From Freezing! Winter Water Wise

It's that time of the year again, winter. With winter also comes the occasional nose biting cold snaps, and that spells trouble with water pipes. One of the time-honored beliefs is that running water during a cold snap will keep water pipes from freezing. While this may work most of the time as a quick fix, the cure is not to run the water but to prevent the problem in the first place – cold air reaching your water pipes.

- The best prevention against frozen water pipes is insulation, and it's really affordable as well. For a **one-time** cost, you can insulate 6 feet of ½ inch pipe for as little as \$1.80 (30¢ a foot), and 6 feet of 1 inch pipe for \$2.40 (30¢ a foot). The pipes on the outer walls and the north side of the house are the most exposed, and should be insulated.
- The second best thing to do is to make sure the basement and crawl spaces of your home has all the drafts / cracks sealed, and any vents closed during the winter.
- A common prevention in mobile homes is the use of heat tape. Heat tape will degrade over time and should be replaced with Underwriters Laboratory (UL) certified heat tape every 3 years. Heat tape should only be used with metal pipe, **never plastic**. Heat tape misuse can cause fires that result in death or injury.
- If you are going on vacation over the winter, do not turn off your heat. Set the thermostat to 55° F and open cabinet doors to expose the water pipes.

If your water pipes freeze –

- **NEVER USE A FLAME TORCH OR SPACE HEATER TO THAW A FROZEN PIPE!**
Fire is not the answer.
- Open a cold water faucet and allow warm air to naturally thaw the pipes, use a fan to blow warm air in the area of the frozen pipes.
- **IF** you use a hair drier or a light bulb to thaw a frozen pipe, **DO NOT USE AROUND COMUSTIBLE MATERIALS**, and use a 3-prong (grounded) plug. Use a Ground Fault Interrupt (GFI) protected outlet to prevent electrocution.

The Town of Hillrose is using individual water meters. Water usage is surcharged, the more you use – the more you pay. Running water to avoid insulating pipes will not be cheaper than insulating pipes and sealing drafts, (and you'll be warmer too). Morgan County Quality Water District strictly monitors how much water the Town uses, and also surcharges the Town as a whole.

It is a common notification from Morgan County Quality Water District to ask customers to run their water to prevent meter freezing, and states that there is not surcharge for over usage. The Town of Hillrose is a bulk user of water and is not extended this forgiveness.

Your cooperation is needed to keep everyone safe and everyone's costs down.