

Protect Your Water Meter and Pipes from Freezing

Most water meters and pipes are in basements, crawl spaces, and other unheated areas, where cold winter temperatures could cause them to freeze.

Homeowners are responsible for protecting meters and pipes from freezing

- If the meter freezes and breaks because you failed to take reasonable steps to protect it, DEP will repair or replace the meter and bill you for the cost.
- If the service line or piping freezes and breaks, it is the homeowner's responsibility to have repairs made by a licensed plumber.

Here are some tips and suggestions to prevent freezing

- Repair broken and cracked windows, doors, and walls.
- Install storm windows on basement windows.
- Tightly close doors and windows to the outside.
- Insulate outside walls.
- Eliminate drafts from crawl spaces.
- When you are checking to see how cold the area is where your meter and pipes are installed, remember that it is colder near the floors and foundation walls.
- Turn off the water to outside faucets, remove hoses, and drain the pipes.
- Ask your local plumbing supplier about materials to insulate pipes and meters. If your meter is installed in an unheated garage, take extra care to ensure the meter is insulated.
- If pipes or the meter are in a closed cabinet against an outside wall, insulate the wall and open the cabinet to allow warmer air to reach them.
- If you are not going to be home for several days during cold weather, arrange to have someone visit periodically and turn on a faucet to ensure that the water is still flowing.

If your service line, pipes, or meters freeze

- Open a faucet near the frozen point to release vapor from melting ice;
- Direct a hair dryer or heat lamp at the frozen section, or put a small space heater nearby; and,
- NEVER thaw a frozen pipe or meter with an open flame. This is not only a fire hazard, but could also cause a steam explosion.

If you are unable to thaw the frozen pipes, consult a licensed plumber.

If your meter is damaged by the cold, contact: **311**

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