

Prevention of Burst or Frozen Pipes

1. In very cold weather it is best to keep heating on at a minimum level in the house at all times, especially at night time when temperatures reach their lowest.
2. Ensure that all pipes and tanks are lagged and remove loft insulation from immediately below the tanks in order to let some heat filter up to them.
3. If you are concerned about pipes freezing in your attic you can leave your loft hatch slightly open to allow further heat to enter into the roof space

Burst & Frozen Pipes

Steps to take when you have a burst or frozen pipe emergency, plus preventative measures to keep your home's water supply running smoothly.

Frozen Pipes

A frozen pipe constitutes a cause for concern because it may burst upon thawing causing thawed water to come pouring from the break. It is best to consult a plumber to address the problem but the following tips may be useful for a competent DIY person:

1. Turn off the water supply

Turn off the main stop tap. You should find this under the kitchen sink or where the service pipe enters your home. (Alternatively you may turn off water at the external "boundary box" or stopcock.)

Turn off the stopcock in your cold water tank if you have one, it's usually found in the attic or loft.

2. Beat the burst

Protect everything around the pipe that appears to be frozen to avoid damage if it bursts.

3. Thawing out

Open the tap nearest to the part of the pipe you think is frozen so the water can flow through when it has melted.

Thaw the ice in the pipe with a hot water bottle or hot air blower (taking care

to keep it well away from any water), beginning from the tap end and working back toward the cold water tank. Never use a heat gun or blow torch.

4. Heating System

If the heating system is frozen, do not light a fire or turn on burner.

Burst Pipe Emergency

A burst pipe can cause serious damage to your home's structure and electrical wiring. The following steps describe what you should do as soon as you discover a burst pipe:

1. Turn off the water supply

Turn off the main stop tap - you should find this under the kitchen sink or where the service pipe enters your home.

Drain the system - turn on all your cold taps.

If water has been leaking through for some time and the ceilings are bulging - be careful, rooms may not be safe to enter.

If you notice the leak quickly you can catch dripping water in buckets. Punch a hole in the ceiling to let water out if it starts to bulge.

2. Turn off water heating systems

Switch off the central heating, immersion heater and any other water heating systems.

If the central heating uses solid fuel, let this die out.

Once water heating has shut down, turn on the hot taps to help drain the system.

3. Turn off the electrics

If water leaks near your electrics or electrical appliances, switch off the mains immediately. If it is wet, don't touch them!

4. Call a professional to repair the damage

Electrical wiring damaged by water can be very dangerous - you will need to call in a professional if this happens.

Use a reliable plumber to repair the burst

Preventing Burst Pipes - Winter Care

If a burst pipe leaks and water comes gushing through the ceiling, it can cause significant real damage to your home and its contents. Even worse, burst pipes and leaks can be complicated to fix, repair work may also involve digging up your lawn, tarmac or paving.

You can avoid this kind of damage by preventing burst pipes and leaks in the first place. As frozen pipes often burst, preventative steps are crucial. Try the following care tips:

- Insulate your loft and the sides of your water tanks. Do not insulate under the water tank.
- Insulate all your pipes.
- Open the loft trap door on very cold days to let heat in.
- If you're away for a while, then ask a friend or relative to check on your home and make sure pipes haven't burst or frozen.
- Make sure you know where your stop tap is and check regularly that you can turn it off easily in an emergency. It's handy to label it so you remember where it is in a panic.

Water Conservation:

1. To avoid shortages of water supply conserve water – do not leave taps running unnecessarily. A running tap can waste 3,000 gallons per day.
2. Check all outside taps and supplies to ensure water is not being wasted.
3. Shut off any leaks until repairs are completed.
4. Insulate all exposed pipes against frost