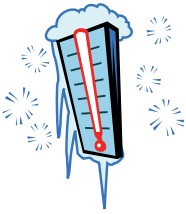


## Ice in the pipes can ruin your home

It is estimated that an average of a quarter-million families suffer damaging consequences each winter because of water pipes that freeze, burst and then flood their homes.



Both plastic (PVC) and copper pipes are susceptible to damage from the cold. Just a small crack can release hundreds of gallons of water in a day, destroying furniture and floors, and even displacing families while cleanup and repairs are made.

Some simple preventive measures can help save you from the mess and destruction resulting from frozen pipes.

**Outdoor Spigots:** You want to eliminate the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe from the

outdoor faucet to just inside the house. Disconnect garden hoses. Purchase insulated covers for outdoor faucets. If practical, shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets.

**Air Leaks:** With below zero temperatures, even a small opening around electrical wiring, vents and pipes can let enough cold air in to freeze a nearby water pipe. Using caulk or insulation, seal any areas where you can feel cold air coming in.

**Insulate Pipes:** The exposed pipes in crawl spaces and attics are most likely to freeze in severe cold. Water pipes in any bath or kitchen area located on an outside wall may also be susceptible to damaging cold. In addition to insulation wrap, you can also purchase heat tape or thermostatically-controlled heat cables to wrap pipes. Make sure these are UL approved and follow all installation and operation instructions. With a little care you can save yourself and your family the huge aggravation of damage from frozen pipes.

## Saving water pipes during winter power outages



If you lose electrical power and you suspect it will be off for several days in winter weather, you need to protect your water pipes.

North Dakota State University Extension Service agricultural engineers Tom Scherer, Vern Hofman and Ken Hellevang have this advice to keep the pipes from freezing:

- \* Shut off the water at the main shut-off valve in your house. If you are on a city or rural water system. If you have a well, turn off the power to the well pump. Drain pressure tanks associated with well pumps.
- \* Turn on all faucets and flush toilets to get as much water out of the water lines as possible. A faucet at the lowest level in the plumbing is especially helpful in draining the pipes. Use air pressure to blow water out of pipes if possible.
- \* Drain the water heater by opening the faucet at the bottom of the heater tank.
- \* Pour RV antifreeze down drains and sinks and into toilet bowls and tanks because some water will remain in pipes and toilets. Have RV antifreeze on hand as part of your emergency preparedness kit.
- \* Disconnect the clothes washer hoses from their faucets, drain the water and pour RV antifreeze into the hoses

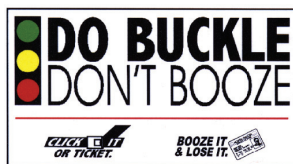
and bottom of the washer. If you have a generator, use it to run the washer briefly to circulate the antifreeze. The antifreeze may not prevent freezing damage if it isn't circulated.

\* If possible, disconnect the dishwasher from its water supply, drain the water, pour RV antifreeze into the bottom of the dishwasher and, using a generator, run the dishwasher briefly to circulate the antifreeze. Check the owners manual for specific recommendations on your model.

Hofman says you can use automobile antifreeze if you don't have the RV variety, but the RV type is preferable because it is designed for use in household pipes.

During the recent power outages throughout the region, some homeowners chose to turn on their faucets and continually run a small amount of water through the pipes. The three experts say that flow of water could overwhelm septic systems.

Hellevang recommends that when the power outage is over, homeowners should have a professional, such as a plumber, check their pipes if they are worried that water may have frozen in them and caused damage to the pipes.



## Production Leaders November, 2005

Farmers Union Insurance agents are on the job serving policyholders in communities across North Dakota. "No one knows more about the risk management needs of farmers, ranchers, residents of rural communities and big cities, and cooperatives than hometown Farmers Union Insurance agents," says Gary Geiszler, marketing manager for Farmers Union Insurance. The following agents excel at providing members with top-quality products at affordable rates:



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