

For Immediate Release

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Cold Snap Could Lead to Frozen Pipes

Wichita Falls, Texas- When water freezes, it expands. Water freezing inside the house piping puts the homeowner's plumbing at risk of rupturing. Pipes in unheated interior spaces are especially prone to freezing, such as pipes in attics, garages, and even under cabinets.

With extended periods of below-freezing temperatures in the forecasts, the City of Wichita Falls Department of Public Works would like to offer a few common practices to help homeowners protect their home's water pipes from freezing.

Start Outdoors:

- 1) Disconnect drain and garden hoses from water faucets. This will help prevent the faucets from freezing.
- 2) Cover outside faucets with an insulating faucet cover.
- 3) If faucet covers cannot be found, then wrap the faucet in t-shirts or rags, cover the fabric insulation with a couple of plastic bags, and then duct tape it into place.
- 4) Insulate and/or heat tape any exposed outside water piping.

Continue Indoors:

- 1) It is a good idea to insulate any exposed piping under sinks and inside cabinets.
- 2) Sealing or caulking cracks near piping that may allow cold air in from the outside, such as dryer vents or water pipes, is another good idea.
- 3) Keep garage doors closed completely. This will keep cold air from entering the house.
- 4) Open cabinet doors to allow heat from the house to circulate and keep the pipes warm.
- 5) As a last resort, let the faucets drip. As water conservation is important in Wichita Falls should only be used as a last resort to prevent freezing pipes.

What To Do If Your Pipes Freeze:

One of the obvious signs that you have a frozen water pipe is when no water comes out of your faucet when you turn it on.

- 1) The best course of action is to contact a plumber, so the pipe can be safely thawed and any ruptures are repaired immediately.
- 2) If your water pipes rupture and water is entering the house, use your private shutoff valve to turn off the water. If you do not have a private shutoff valve, or if you cannot find it, you can call the City of Wichita Falls Utility Collections Division or the Water Distribution offices for an Emergency Turn Off at the meter.

Utility Collections (M-F, 8-5) 761-7414

Water Distribution (M-F, 8-5) 761-4333

Afterhours and Weekends 761-4333

The cost (\$30) of this emergency service will be added to your next month's utility bill.

NOTE: The service to turn the water back on and return you to service is free and will not incur a charge.

How You Can Easily Monitor Your Usage:

The City offers a free meter monitoring service called MyH2O. This service gives you the ability to monitor your hourly, daily, and monthly usage with as little as a twenty-four-hour delay. It also has an option to set alerts based on usage levels that you designate.

- 1) Go to www.wichitafallstx.gov, click Utility Payments, then MyH2O online portal
 - 2) Click Need to set up an account
 - 3) You will receive an email with a link. Click the link and fill out the requested information. When it asks for the account number, it only wants the numbers to the left of the dash on your bill. If it asks for a security token, it wants your house number.
 - 4) Once you have registered and logged in click Settings and then Usage Alerts. This will enable you to be notified via email and or text if you exceed your set amount of water.
- If you need additional assistance or have questions concerning MyH2O please contact Utility Collections at 940-761-7414 during regular business hours. Additionally, there is also a FAQ on the Utility Collections page with information.

The City of Wichita Falls is committed to assisting its citizens in protecting themselves from inclement weather situations.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting Daniel Nix, Utilities Operations Manager, at 940-691-1153.

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