

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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Public Service Announcement Take Steps to Prevent Plumbing Pipes from Freezing

Concord, NH – In response to the recent ice storm, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services has released the following information to help residents prevent water pipes in their home or business from freezing.

Preventing Frozen Pipes:

Insulate all water pipes from cold moving air and keep them dry. Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes like a "pipe sleeve" or installing UL-listed "heat tape," "heat cable," or similar materials on exposed water pipes. Many products are available at your local building supplies retailer.

If your home loses electricity and heat, shut off water at water entrance (if municipal supply) or at pump (if private well).

Open up all faucets. Drain water in the water distribution piping system to the lowest point. The lowest point may be the drain to the well pump pressure tank if there is one.

Flush toilets to minimize the amount of water in each toilet tank.

Use antifreeze-

Pour a sufficient amount of Non Toxic Anti-freeze (propylene glycol) into the toilet tank to dilute the residual water with anti-freeze to lower the freezing temperature of the liquid in the tank.

Pour a sufficient amount of the anti-freeze into the bowl (trap) of the toilet to lower the freezing temperature of the residual water in the bowl (trap).

Pour a sufficient amount of antifreeze in each sink, lavatory, tub and shower drain and washing machine standpipe and any other fixture to fill the trap with the anti-freeze.

In situations where power is not available for several days, both water heater and hot water boilers should be drained.

To drain a water heater, shut-off the power sources to the water heater to prevent damage to the heater when the power is restored, then open the drain valve at the bottom of the water heater or hot water storage tank to drain.

To drain a hot water boiler, shut-off the power supply to the boiler, open drain valve to the boiler and drain water from boiler while opening bleeder valves or other means to allow air into the

system to properly drain piping and boiler. Try to find openings in the highest point of the piping system.

If the pipes freeze, the building must be heated. Do not try to thaw out a heating system with a torch. Without available water, if something catches fire from the torch, there won't be any opportunity to put it out

If you have any questions, please call a qualified licensed plumber for assistance with the plumbing and a qualified heating technician for assistance with the heating system. This information was coordinated through the DES, the NH Board for Licensing and Regulation of Plumbers and the NH Fire Marshal's Office.