

## **Fall is the time to prepare for cold weather**

### **Avoid trouble by taking precautions NOW:**

#### **Find the master shutoff valve.**

The master shutoff valve turns off the water to the entire house. Learn its location and make sure everyone in your household knows where it is. The Master Valve is usually located on the pipe system where the water service enters your house. You may want to operate the valve to become accustomed to how the valve operates and to check to see if you and others can work the valve from the open to closed position, you'll be checking the valve to find out if is operable and not stuck. Valves that are not used for long periods of time may experience mineral build-up and become difficult to turn.

If the water service valve is inoperable or located in an inaccessible place consult with us about installing a new easy to operate service shut-off valve, ball valves with drains are now very popular as they are easy to turn and the drain "waste" feature allows for easy evacuation of water in the line should the line need to be serviced or to be winterized –dry. We can do a number of things; another is to put a shut off valve in a more accessible spot or installing an electronically operated shut off valve that can be operated remotely, by the push of a button.

It is critical to be able get to this valve quickly and to then be able to get the valve shut-off quickly and easily if a pipe should burst. The faster the water service valve it is shut off the less water damage may occur to your property and belongings.

#### **Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses.**

Detach your hose, detaching the hose from the silcock valve is of up-most importance in preparing for cold weather.

First lets establish the term - Silcock. A silcock valve is the name for the valve also known as wall hydrants, (some may call it a faucet - it's not) a silcock is located on outside of your home and is designed to attach hose to.

Detaching the hose allows water to drain from the "silcock" valve, so a Ice Plug doesn't build up within the valve and burst the valve or the pipe it's connected to. A leaking valve can create a similar set of conditions and also create an Ice Plug that will burst the silcock valve and it doesn't matter if it is a frost proof type or not. Frost proof valves must be installed properly, so they will drain and allowed to drain, leaks need to be repaired and hoses need to be disconnected while the water can still freely drain so no ice can build within the valve.

About Frost Free / Frost Proof and Silcock Valves - Many silcocks that are installed in cold weather climates are a design type that is known as "Frost-Proof or Frost Free". Frost proof valves have a relatively long design form factor; this is because the

function of the frost proof valve is to make a situation in the pipe system where the water is being shutoff in the warmer non-freezing confines of the heated building, within the building. Other types of silcocks are not frost free, so have a look at your outdoor hose valve and determine what type silcock valve you have. If you have a non freeze proof design silcock, those types need to be shut down and the water needs to be drained from them before for freezing conditions occur. For proper winterization of pipe systems call your us.

### **Shut down your sprinkler system.**

Turn off the automatic timer and have a professional irrigation contractor winterize your irrigation system. It's time to put the lawn to bed for the winter.

### **Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas.**

It's best to wrap water pipes in unheated areas (such as the garage, basement, attic, crawl space, or space beneath your mobile home) before temperatures plummet. We offer a number of pipe wraps, caulks and insulation on this web site.

### **Consider installing "heat tape" or "heat cable."**

Install "heat tape" or similar materials on all exposed water pipe (i.e., exterior pipe, or pipe located where the temperature might drop below freezing). It is relatively easy to install. Be sure to use only UL-listed products and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

### **Seal off access doors, air vents, and cracks.**

Winter winds whistling through overlooked openings can quickly freeze exposed water pipes. Insulate, Insulate, Insulate, there are many types of insulation and caulks that can be used for different applications. Installing insulation is probably the best project that a homeowner can do to get security from freeze ups and to create a more energy efficient dwelling; insulating provides you with the best return on your investment. When insulating, be mindful DO NOT plug air vents used by your dryer, stove, furnace or water heater or other purposeful vents such as crawl space vents that will need to be open during the warmer seasons.

During an extended cold spell, pipes can freeze even if precautions have been taken. If a pipe on your property freezes, Water Authorities recommend that you call a licensed plumber to help you thaw the pipe, many professional plumbing contractors have special pipe thawing machines to quickly and safely thaw frozen pipes, plus the plumber will be there to access damage and make necessary repairs of the burst breaks in the pipe. If a pipe on your property bursts, and you can not shut it off or can not get your plumber immediately, then you will need an emergency water shut-off, call your water authority.