

Wicked winter weather can cause serious problems within your home or facility. Below is some lessons learned from around the state that will help facility staff to mitigate a serious issue if confronted.

Know Where and How In Case of Emergency:

- ❖ To turn off the main water system (only if pipes are frozen or water leak)
- ❖ To turn off the sprinkler system (only if pipes are frozen or water leak)
- ❖ The keys are to all the doors
- ❖ To turn off the main gas valve to the home
- ❖ To unlock the sprinkler riser room door (if applicable)
- ❖ What the fire alarm panel means when it shows certain codes or words
- ❖ To provide a backup generator to run essential appliances in the home
- ❖ To provide a safe route to the public way
- ❖ To relocate outside the local area and travel routes
- ❖ To have a backup plan for transportation
- ❖ To have a battery operated radio, cell phone, portable charger, extra batteries
- ❖ To look for Warning Signs of overstress roof conditions
- ❖ To understand water drainage from your facility grounds (flooding after snow event)
- ❖ To find out how your community warns the public about severe weather
 - Siren
 - Radio
 - Television
 - Local public health and emergency management websites

Extra items on hand or easy to locate

- ❖ Extra blankets, sleeping bags, warm winter coats
- ❖ Drinking water
- ❖ Canned/no-cook food (bread, crackers, dried fruits)
- ❖ Non-electric can opener
- ❖ Prescription medicine
- ❖ First-aid kit
- ❖ Product that melts ice on walkways
- ❖ Supply of cat litter or bag of sand to add traction on walkways and driveways/roads
- ❖ Battery-powered lamps or lanterns

If transportation due to evacuation is necessary, items to have in vehicle

- ❖ Shovel
- ❖ Windshield scraper
- ❖ Chains or rope
- ❖ Tire chains
- ❖ Canned compressed air with sealant for emergency tire repair
- ❖ Road salt and sand to help tires get traction
- ❖ Booster cables
- ❖ Emergency flares
- ❖ Bright colored flag or help signs
- ❖ First aid kit
- ❖ Road maps
- ❖ Compass/GPS

Water has a unique property in that it expands as it freezes. This expansion puts tremendous pressure on whatever is containing it, including metal or plastic pipes. No matter the "strength" of a container, expanding water can cause pipes to break. Pipes that freeze most frequently are those that are exposed to severe cold, like outdoor hose bibs, swimming pool supply lines, water sprinkler lines, and water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets. Pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation are also subject to freezing

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. Newspaper can provide some degree of insulation and protection to exposed pipes – even ¼" of newspaper can provide significant protection in areas that usually do not have frequent or prolonged temperatures below freezing

To Thaw Frozen Pipes

- ❖ If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.
- ❖ Keep the cold faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.

- ❖ Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use an open flame device.
- ❖ Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible, or if you cannot thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.
- ❖ Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too.

During Cold Weather, Take Preventative Action

- ❖ Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- ❖ Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals
- ❖ When the weather is very cold outside, let the cold water drip from the faucet served by exposed pipes. Running water through the pipe - even at a trickle - helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- ❖ Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night. By temporarily suspending the use of lower nighttime temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent a much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.
- ❖ Please contact your sprinkler contractor for any tips that are allowed to prevent sprinkler pipes from bursting due to freezing water

Preventing Snow Melt Water Problems

The large snow depth this year holds lots of water. Each cubic foot of drifted, piled or compacted snow contains 2 to 3 gallons of water. Actions taken now can minimize future water problems.

Eave-trough down-spouts should carry the water several feet from a house to a well-drained area. About 2,500 gallons of water will come from a 1,000 square foot roof with one foot of snow depth across the roof. This much water may cause problems if allowed to drain next to the house.

Move snow on the ground away from the house. Snow melt water may cause a wet basement if allowed to run down along the basement wall. If the ground is sloped 1 inch per foot near the house, moving the snow just 3-5 feet from the house will reduce problems.

Examine and clean both the sump pump and pit. If you do not have a sump pump this office would highly encourage to rent/purchase. Test your sump pump by pouring water into the pit. Make sure the discharge hose carries the water several feet away from the house to a well-drained area. Also make sure that the pipe is on sloped ground so it drains to prevent it from freezing.

Remove snow from around yards to minimize soft, wet soil conditions. Remember that a 20 foot diameter 10 foot high pile of snow contains about 2,600 gallons of water. Move the snow to well drained areas.