

Avoid frozen waterlines

this winter



Helpful Information

- Idaho winters can be very frigid. As temperatures drop below freezing, frost penetrates into the ground. Waterlines in Idaho Falls are generally buried between 5 to 6 feet deep, keeping them below the winter frostline.
- During extended periods of extreme cold, frost can penetrate more than 7 feet deep, causing serious problems for underground utilities, especially waterlines.
- Smaller waterlines, such as those running from the street to your property are more prone to freezing. As water freezes, it expands in size which then stops the waterflow and causes waterlines to split or rupture.

In the event of a water emergency

In the event of an emergency or even minor waterline repairs, it is extremely beneficial for everyone in your home to know the location of the master shut-off valve and how to operate the valve. The master shut-off valve is typically located where the waterline enters your home, most likely in the basement or crawlspace. If you have a finished basement and are unable to locate the valve, it may have been covered by a basement wall. The valve is typically either a gate valve or a ball valve. Check to make sure the valve operates freely and is easily accessible.



Master shut-off ball valve



Master shut-off gate valve

Before the cold weather sets in

Insulate indoor waterlines in unheated areas to slow the freezing process.

Protect vacant property by leaving some heat on. If heat is off, winterize all waterlines and fixtures by draining them.

Protect outdoor hoses by disconnecting them from the hose bibbs on the exterior of the house. Drain and store hoses. For additional protection, cover hose bibbs with insulative covers.

Have your sprinkler system winterized. If unsure how to do it, consult a sprinkler system professional. Leave valves on your Pressure Vacuum Breaker (PVB) at 45 degree angles to the pipe to protect from freezing.



If you suspect frozen waterlines

If reduced or no water flow is detected, call us to make sure service isn't temporarily disrupted. If flow is reduced, allow cold water to flow to thaw a partially frozen line. If you have no flow to any indoor faucets, your waterline may be frozen.

Double check water valves inside your home to ensure they are completely open and haven't been tampered with. Don't forget valves near water heaters and water softeners. If all valves are open, your waterline is most likely frozen.

If your pipes DO freeze

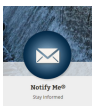
Frozen lines usually occur where the waterline enters the basement or crawlspace.

If you try to thaw it yourself, do not use a torch.

Applying too much heat too fast can cause the ice inside the pipe to fracture and rupture resulting in flooding. Rather, use a hairdryer, space heater, or rags soaked in warm water to gradually warm the frozen pipe until a little flow of cold water is restored at a faucet. Once flow is restored, allow the faucet's cold water to run until the frozen section is thawed and full flow is restored before shutting it off. You may need to leave a trickle of cold water running to prevent the line from freezing again, especially if the frozen section is not able to be further protected. If you are unsure about how to proceed, contact a licensed plumber for assistance.

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Contact Us

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