FROZEN PIPES
Prevention and Thawing

Customers have asked the Chester Water Authority for information about how to prevent water pipes in the home from freezing. Below are tips to help you be prepared for the cold winter months approaching.

Why Pipe Freezing Is a Problem

Water 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. Also, pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation are also subject to freezing.

Preventing Frozen Pipes

Before the onset of cold weather, prevent freezing of these water supply lines and pipes by following these recommendations:

- Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors. Close inside valves supplying outdoor hose bibs. Open the outside hose bibs to allow water to drain. Keep the outside valve open so that any water remaining in the pipe can expand without causing the pipe to break.
- Check around the home for other areas where water supply lines are located and are in unheated areas. Look in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated. A hot water supply line can freeze just as a cold water supply line can freeze if the water is not running through the pipe and the water temperature in the pipe is cold.
- Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes. Many products are available at your local building supplies retailer. Follow manufacturer's recommendations when installing their products.

During Cold Weather, Take Preventive 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 up out of the reach of children.)
- Keep the thermostat set to the same temperature both during the day and at night.
- If you will be going away during cold weather, leave the heat on in your home, set to a temperature no lower than 55°F.

If Your Pipes Freeze:

Use a hair dryer! Find where the pipe enters the home from the outside and try warming the pipe with a hair dryer. ***DO NOT USE A BLOW TORCH!*** A blow torch will boil the water inside of the frozen pipe causing it to burst. If the hair dryer doesn't do the trick, call our Customer Service Department at (610) 876-8181 or (800) 793-2323.