



Preventing and Thawing Frozen Pipes:

Frozen pipes are a serious risk across Southwest North Dakota as the unexpected cold temperatures and deep freeze can cause pipes to freeze. There are ways to consider preventing and thawing of a frozen water pipe:

- **Check all faucets** in your home to find out if you have frozen pipes, if one pipe freezes, others may too. Check around the home for areas where water supply lines are located 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.
- To determine the location of a frozen pipe, run your hand along the accessible water pipe while feeling for extremely cold spots. If a cold portion of the pipe is encountered, **thaw it gently by applying heat** to it. Use heating methods such as an electric heating pad, electric hair dryer or by wrapping the pipes with a towel soaked in hot water.
- **DO NOT** use a propane torch, kerosene or portable heater, or other open flame devices to thaw pipes. These devices could cause a rupture of the water line and is also a **fire hazard for the home**. Electrically heating water lines by using a welder only works on metallic lines. It will not work on any plastic, pex or pvc piping.
- If you suspect a line is about to freeze, **check the temperature of the water**. Do this at a location near where the water enters the home. If the temperature is close to freezing, run a substantial amount of water until the temperature increases. This process could take some time. Showering and washing loads of laundry will put the extra water to good use.
- Leaving the water running at a trickle can prevent frozen water lines, but be careful. **Trickling water can sometimes lead to frozen sewer lines**. In the past, water and sewer lines were installed in close proximity of each other and often at the same depth. Trickling water in a sewer line can cool to the point of freezing, which could lead to the sewer service freezing shut and causing a sewer backup.
- If you choose to run the water at a trickle, it is advised to **periodically turn up the flow of the water** to about a garden hose size stream for several minutes. The increased flow of water allows for a better exchange of heat between the water and water service line/ground and also allows the water to assist in heating the sewer system.
- If the freezing water issue is on a septic system, trickling water should be diverted away from the septic system. Septic systems have a limited capacity to accept excess water in deep frost conditions. The trickling water could compromise the on-site septic system, leaving the customer with more problems and expense. If possible, **use a hose to run the trickling water to an outside**, acceptable area.
- If the water service line does become frozen, open one or two faucets. This will **allow the ice to have room to expand without** damaging any other piping.
- **Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors** to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing.
- **Keep the thermostat set at the same temperature** both during the day and at night. By temporary suspending the use of lower setback temperatures, you may incur a higher heating bill, but you can prevent much more costly repair job if pipes freeze and burst.