

## Cold Weather Water Tips

Freezing weather takes its toll on your home. Martin County reminds its customers to make a thorough check of their homes to protect water lines and guard against the possible inconvenience of loss of service due to frozen lines.

### Before Freezing Weather Sets In:

- \* **Wrap exposed pipes**  
Cover any exposed pipes with insulating material. If you do not have commercial insulating material use plastic, newspaper, rags or blankets.
- \* **Block air passages into crawl spaces**  
Check crawl spaces to be sure pipes are protected. Use cardboard or rags to block air passages.
- \* **Secure basements against the cold**  
Plug up drafty cracks and repair broken window panes.
- \* **Check outside faucets**  
Remove hoses from outside faucets and check the washers to be sure there are no leaks which could freeze and back up into the household plumbing.
- \* **Locate your shut-off valve**  
Make sure every member of the household knows where your main water shutoff valve is located. The shutoff valve should be used in the event of a burst pipe or if you have a significant leak. The shutoff valve is usually located where the water pipe enters your house or on a vertical pipe leading from the point of entry inside your basement wall or crawl space. In some homes, it can be found in the utility room. *If you do not have a main shutoff valve, you should install one for your protection.*

### During Freezing Weather:

- \* **Keep meter box lids closed**  
Do not open your meter box, as injuries can result from lids which are not properly secured. Also, cold air can freeze the meter. If you notice a meter box lid which is not properly secured, please call our office immediately.
- \* **Make sure heat reaches your pipes**  
If your pipes are enclosed in a cabinet under the bathroom or kitchen sink, leave the doors open so heat can get in.
- \* **Keep a trickle of water running**  
During periods of low usage and particularly on sub-zero nights, keep a trickle of water running from the faucet highest in the home. This trickle should be a steady stream the size of the lead in a pencil.

### If You Have A Frozen Pipe:

- \* **If you do not know the location of the problem, call Harnett County Public Utilities**  
We will check to see if you have water available at the meter. If the water is frozen at the water meter, we will correct the problem. If not, the problem is in your household plumbing and it is your responsibility to correct it.
- \* **Wait for the pipes to thaw**  
If you have some running water, the safest and cheapest thing to do is wait for the frozen pipes to thaw.
- \* **Never use an open flame**  
Never try to thaw a pipe with a flame, because you may start a fire.
- \* **Call a plumber**  
If all else fails, call a plumber and get professional assistance.