



Washington Rural Counties Insurance Program

# Freezing Pipes

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Risk Alert

[www.wrcip.us](http://www.wrcip.us)

As outside temperatures plummet, the likelihood of freezing pipes increases. Frozen pipes are at higher risk of bursting, which can lead to costly water damage. The following are some best practices for plumbing winterization, as the weather gets colder:

1. **Insulate exposed pipes:** Typically pipes are susceptible to freezing when temperatures fall below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Insulating pipes in unheated and exposed areas will greatly reduce the likelihood of a pipe bursting.
2. **Seal off crawl spaces and attics:** This will prevent the air in these areas from cooling below freezing, protecting any pipes that might run through them.
3. **Exterior faucet maintenance:** During severe temperature drops (below freezing), consider allowing faucets located on exterior walls to run a steady drip. This eliminates pressure buildup between the faucet and any ice blockage. Even if the pipes do freeze, they most likely will not burst.
4. **Inspect exposed plumbing:** Do a visual inspection of exposed plumbing to check for leaks and potential cold spots. Any drips, leaks, or cold spots can then be fixed before they become larger problems. It may also be helpful to leave the cabinets under sinks open, especially on exterior walls, to allow warm air to circulate around the pipes.



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