



CH2M - City of Ontario
Public Works Department
1551 NW 9th Street
Ontario, OR 97914
Voice (541) 889-8572
Fax (541) 889-3488

PREVENTING FROZEN WATER PIPES

The City of Ontario Public Works wants to remind water consumers that as the cold temperatures are upon us for the Winter season it is time again to protect water pipes from freezing.

Here are some helpful tips to prevent freezing water pipes in extremely extended cold spells or extended power outages:

1. Leave a cold water tap running slowly, at a level just above a drip. This will allow water in your pipes to circulate just enough to prevent freezing. If you allow a faucet in your home to run at a slow trickle (the stream of water being approximately the diameter of a pencil lead), the calculated cost is less than one dollar a month. This is much less than a call to a plumber.
2. Leave interior cupboard doors open under sinks, especially if the sink is adjacent to an exterior wall.
3. Shut off and drain pipes leading to outside faucets. If you do not have a shut-off valve, you can purchase insulated covers for your faucets at your local hardware store.
4. Seal any leaks that allow cold air inside where pipes are located. Close all foundation vents or make sure they are insulated to keep cold air from getting under your home.
5. Locate and insulate pipes most susceptible to freezing; near outside walls, in crawl spaces, and in attics. Many hardware stores carry foam pipe insulation for this purpose.
6. Drain your sprinkler system and have it blown dry with compressed air. Most lawn care professionals offer this service.

If an extended power outage should occur it may be difficult to thaw frozen pipes, because most methods of thawing involve using electrical appliances. Keep this in mind when you make your preparations. If the power goes out and you need to thaw a frozen pipe, you may need a portable generator to power any thawing appliance.

The City of Ontario does not recommend using any means to thaw frozen pipes except for approved thawing devices. Use proper methods and procedures as recommended by the manufacturer when using such devices.

The City may need to be one of the first calls you make to verify that the City water meter is not frozen. At that point, if you are unable to locate the frozen section of pipe or are unsure of what to do, contact a licensed plumber.

If you do not have a main shut off valve, you will need to call the City Utility Shop for help in shutting off your water to repair broken pipes, if need be. If you have any questions, call the City Operations Shop at 541-889-8572, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, or after hours call Malheur County Dispatch at 541-473-5125.

Please remember these tips for whenever the weather gets extremely cold or if extended electrical power outages occur. It's always best to be prepared.