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What can I do if my household pipes freeze?

If you turn on your taps and have no water, it could simply be that the pipes in your home are frozen, rather than your service line. Try running different cold water taps throughout the house. If more than one has running water while others don't, your issue is likely internal. You may want to contact a licensed plumber for assistance. Here are some steps to take if you want to try and thaw indoor pipes yourself, as well as precautions you should be aware of to protect your home:

Precautions

- Do not use a torch with an open flame to thaw pipes, as this is a fire hazard.
- Ensure you know the location of your master water shut-off valve. The frozen pipe may be broken and when the water in it thaws, it will leak. If the pipe is broken, you will need to shut off the water in your house until the pipe is repaired.

Steps to thaw a frozen pipe

- If you have a history of frozen pipes, or your water is currently frozen turn on a tap in the basement, preferably the cold water faucet in the laundry room.
- Use a blow dryer, electric blanket or heating pad to warm the suspected frozen pipe for one or two hours. Check blow dryer regularly to ensure it does not overheat; do not leave unattended.
- Place a warm towel or rag around the suspected frozen pipe.
- You may also use a portable heater with caution, especially around flammable materials.
- Always use caution when applying any heat source near insulation or other flammable materials.
- Depending on the outside temperature and the extent of freezing within the pipe, the thawing process could take between one and six hours.
- If these steps do not resolve the problem, contact a licensed plumber.

After thawing

- Keep the pipes warm: if the pipe has frozen already it is susceptible to freezing again. Keep this area warm by opening basement, cellar or cupboard doors, and/or by insulating the pipe, and take action to prevent freezing in future years.
- Watch for leaks where the pipe froze: while the pipe was frozen, expanding ice may have cracked or broken your pipe.