



## **ALERT** - Tips to Protect Your Water Pipes in Cold Weather



The **extreme cold temperatures** predicted for late this week and into the weekend can be harsh on plumbing. We **strongly recommend that action** is taken to prevent frozen pipes that can cause significant damage and disruption to your operations.

Refer to the below tips from MMA Risk Management Services to help protect your water pipes during cold weather:

### **Physical Controls:**

- Keep **heat on** in the building at a **minimum of 55** degrees to help protect the pipes in case the temperature drops.
- **DO:**
  - Close outside vents, crawl spaces and doors so cold air doesn't seep inside.
  - Wrap water pipes subject to cold or freezing in heat tape.
  - Open cabinet doors overnight to allow warm air to reach water pipes.
  - Keep a trickle of water running from the highest faucet in the building. (During extremely cold periods, this trickle should be the size of a pencil point).
  - Inspect all outside air dampers or ventilation grills for proper operation.
  - Install new or replace pipe insulation where needed for freeze protection.
  - Make sure the air activated valve in a wet-dry sprinkler system is functioning properly.
- Test backup generators and transfer switches for proper operation.
- Use loss of **power-low heat alarms**; or **temperature-humidity sensors** connected to an app (if wi-fi available).

### **Administrative Controls:**

- Assign staff to **frequently check** the building after-hours, on the weekend, and during power outages.
  
- **DO:**
  - Know where the **water shut-off valve** is and how to operate it in an emergency.
  - Provide emergency contact numbers to staff assigned to building inspections.
  
- Have a plan for monitoring, maintaining, and refueling the generator while in use.

### **Thawing Frozen Pipes:**

- **DO:**
  - Clear frozen blockages as soon as possible to minimize the danger of pipes bursting in some inaccessible spot.
  - Turn off the water at the main shut-off valve if there are frozen pipes.
  - Open a nearby faucet slightly so the pipe can drain as it thaws.
  - Thaw pipes by applying hot air from a hair dryer or electric heater, or by using a heating pad or wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water.
  
- **DO NOT:**
  - Use hot water or a blowtorch on a frozen pipe.
  - Use electrical appliances in areas of standing water.