



Risk Management Services

TAKE ACTION AFTER PIPES FREEZE OR BREAK

If a pipe in your facility freezes, promptly follow these steps to help mitigate damage:



1. Shut off main water valve(s)

Train employees on how to shut off the water valve closest to the breakage and to do so right after a pipe breakage is identified. Make sure to identify and clearly mark all water shutoff valves through the facility. Exercise these shutoff valves at least once a year to ensure they will operate if needed in an emergency situation.

This step is for domestic and process water lines only, not fire sprinkler water lines.



2. Implement impairment program for fire sprinkler systems

Shutoff valves for fire sprinkler systems should never be closed unless it is clear that the water flowing is due to a pipe bursting and not a fire. These valves may normally be chained and locked in their open positions. Visual confirmation is needed before closing a fire sprinkler valve. Once the valve is closed, notify your alarm company, your fire department, and PHLY of your impairment. Discontinue hazardous operations and implement an hourly fire watch for the areas affected by the impaired sprinkler system. Expedite repair work of the burst sprinkler pipe then bring the sprinkler system online as soon as possible.

Keep in mind that closing a main valve renders your fire sprinkler system inoperable for the area affected by that valve. Therefore, be certain of the source of water flow before closing a fire sprinkler valve and be cautious of all fire risks while the system is impaired.



3. Locate ice plug and administer heat if a water line is frozen but not burst

Suspect that a water pipe is frozen if little or no water flows from it. If the pipe is cracked, shut off the water supply to the affected section of piping. Have water cleanup equipment ready if needed. Identify the suspected area of the ice plug by looking first along exterior walls or for pipes that are bulging or have frost around them. Use a hair dryer to thaw the ice plug. A heat gun may be used with caution, but remove all combustible material from the area first. Wrap towels soaked in hot water or heat tape on the affected pipe area. Use space heaters cautiously and with appropriate fire safety measures. Turn up the heat in your building. Do not use a blow torch, kerosene or propane heater, or any other method with an open flame.

It may be likely that the frozen pipe is behind drywall or runs behind an interior wall. Cut into/open the wall with caution. If you cannot find the ice plug, call a plumber. Check other faucets and water outlets to see if their pipes are frozen as well.



4. Implement emergency response plans

Responding to a water damage situation should be considered in your emergency response and business continuity plans. Action steps you should take include safeguarding people affected, minimizing property damage, and notifying clients, suppliers, employees, governmental bodies, PHLY's Claims Department, and other pertinent parties. Preserve records and computer data. Take steps if operations need to be temporarily relocated. Access a sample Emergency Procedures Manual through your MyPHLY account at PHLY.com.

TAKE ACTION AFTER PIPES FREEZE OR BREAK - *continued*



5. Contact a water remediation contractor

A reputable water remediation contractor can respond 24/7/365. They will immediately instruct you over the phone regarding steps you can take to mitigate water damage and will respond onsite promptly to take over the water remediation efforts. Preplan and consult with your insurance agent or with PHLY to select a remediation contractor ahead of time. PHLY offers [recommendations for restoration and reconstruction contractors](#) at PHLY.com.



6. Remove high value or water-sensitive equipment and materials

Identify high value and water-sensitive equipment and materials ahead of time. Ensure these are kept raised, off the floor, and ideally above grade level. Remove these items from areas adjacent to and below the source of water damage. Use plastic tarps or other water-shielding materials if needed.

Prioritize medical equipment and supplies, computer equipment and data, vital paper records, and high valued electrical equipment



7. Take pictures, video, and document damaged property

Once you have taken action on the other measures listed above, take pictures and video and begin documenting damaged property. This will help expedite the claims handling process and will help get your operations back up and running. Take pictures and video now so that you have a record of your property before any property damage takes place. Maintain updated records of major equipment purchases.

[PHLY's HEAT strategy](#) can help prevent and mitigate pipe freeze, breakage and water damage incidents. A modest investment of time and resources now can help prevent a major property disaster down the road. Many people put off these simple steps because they believe a property damage incident won't happen to them or will not be significant if one does occur. Each year, hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses find that these assumptions were wrong. Help your organization weather safely through this season by visiting www.phly.com/heat to implement the strategy.

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