



**Scottish  
Water**

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## Protect your pipes

Be prepared in winter.

Heat, insulate and protect your home.

From drinking, brushing, cleaning or flushing, water plays an important part in everyone's daily life. To help be prepared during cold weather, here is some helpful advice on how to **heat, insulate** and **protect** your home, so we can all play our part to keep the water cycle running – it's your water, your life.

## Follow our winter code

### Heat, insulate and protect

#### Heat

Warmth offers the best protection against frozen pipes, so when temperatures are low leave your heating on a low setting, or set it to come on a couple of times a day.

#### Insulate

Pipes don't like the cold - whether they are outdoor or indoor, metal or plastic, new or old. Making sure pipes and water tanks are properly insulated is one of the simplest, and cheapest, things you can do to help protect your property from the cold. Make sure that there are no gaps at bends, valves or fittings, and that you use suitable insulation material – a licensed plumber or your local DIY store should be able to give you advice.

If you have a water tank, it should be fitted with an insulation jacket or alternatively, the top and sides of the tank can be wrapped with suitable insulation material. Don't place loft insulation under the tank, though, as this stops heat from the rooms below helping to keep the tank from freezing.

#### Protect

If you're going away, make sure you have someone who can check regularly for any problems. If your neighbours don't have a key for your property make sure they have contact details for someone who does, in case of an emergency. If your property is going to be vacant over the winter months, turn off your water supply and drain the system – a licensed plumber should be able to give you advice about this.

Dripping water and cold draughts both increase the risk of pipes freezing – so have any drips or leaks repaired as soon as you discover them, and reduce draughts by fitting draught excluders to doors and windows.

Even when your home is winter ready sometimes damage can happen, so make sure you have adequate building and contents insurance.

## If a pipe bursts...

- 1** Locate the stop valve which controls the water supply entering your home and turn it off immediately. The location of the stop valve will vary, but the most common locations are under a sink (kitchen or utility room), in a garage or close to the hot water system (wherever the mains supply enters your house). This normally closes by turning clockwise. Then switch off your immersion heater and central heating boiler and let any solid fuel fires die down. Open all hot and cold taps to drain them of any remaining water to minimise the damage. You should also warn your neighbours so they can take steps to reduce the chance of any damage to their homes.
- 2** Switch off your electricity supply at the mains if there's any chance that water could come into contact with electrical wiring or fittings.

Water and electricity can be a deadly combination, so if you are in any doubt about what to do in this case, don't take a risk - call a qualified electrician.

- 3** If you live in a flat, terraced or semi-detached home, you may have a shared water supply. Make sure you can get to the stop valve; this is normally located where the water supply enters the building. Then check with your neighbours that turning off the water has not affected their supply. Once repaired, it's important to remember to make sure your hot water system is refilled BEFORE you re-light your boiler or switch on the immersion heater.

## Repairing a burst pipe

Temporary repairs to burst pipes can sometimes be done using repair putty or a pipe repair clamp, which can be bought from most DIY outlets. However, any temporary repair needs to be replaced as soon as possible by a permanent repair. We recommend this be carried out by a licensed plumber.



## If a pipe freezes...

- 1 Turn off the stop valve immediately and open all COLD taps to drain the system, but NEVER turn on the hot taps – if you have a hot water cylinder it may collapse if the pipes leading to it are frozen.
- 2 Call a licensed plumber if you are in any doubt about what to do.



## Thawing out your pipes

Never attempt to thaw out frozen pipes by switching on your immersion heater or central heating boiler. Instead, check for leaking joints or bursts in the pipes.

If it is safe to do so, then gently heat any frozen sections with a heated cloth wrapped around the pipe. Never apply a direct flame.

## Licensed plumbers

We would always recommend the use of licensed plumbers.

Scottish Water supports and promotes the WaterSafe scheme. WaterSafe is a dedicated online search facility to help customers find the nearest qualified plumbing and heating professionals in their area.

Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) runs the Plumbing Industry Licensing Scheme and this is part of WaterSafe.

To find a licensed plumber in your area, visit WaterSafe at [www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk) or SNIPEF at [www.needaplumber.org](http://www.needaplumber.org)

# Beat the cold

- **Keep your home warm:** make sure heaters are well-maintained and working properly. Keep furniture away from radiators and other heat sources so they don't block heat from circulating freely. Thick, lined curtains are very effective at slowing down heat loss. You can also fit aluminium foil behind any radiators which are on outside walls to reflect heat back into the room.
- **Keep a small emergency pack handy** in case of loss of power or other services – include items such as a torch, radio (with spare batteries) and copies of important documents like insurance policies. Keep it in

an easily accessible place where you can find it when you need it, even in the dark.

You may also want to include repair putty or a repair clamp in your pack for those temporary pipe repairs.

- **Keep a note of the telephone numbers** of your local licensed plumber, electrician, council and insurance company for emergency use (you may want to keep a copy in your emergency pack).
- **Be a good neighbour:** when cold weather hits, keep an eye out for your neighbours, especially the frail and elderly or disabled.

**Remember:** Any pipework within your property boundary is your responsibility, and spending a little time on good frost protection now could help you avoid trouble and expense during cold weather.

## Free stop valve sticker:

**Think ahead:** why not contact us to get a quick reminder sticker which you can write the name and number of your local licensed plumber on, so you've got it handy for an emergency?

Write to **Customer Marketing, Free Stop Valve Sticker, Free Stop Valve Promotion, PO Box 8855, Edinburgh, EH10 6YQ;** or email [customermarketing@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:customermarketing@scottishwater.co.uk) quoting Free Stop Valve Promotion, giving us your name and full address (we can only send one sticker per household. This is only available in Scotland).

# Keeping up to date and getting in touch

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[help@scottishwater.co.uk](mailto:help@scottishwater.co.uk)

## Call



Customer Helpline free 24/7  
0800 0778778

## Text (SMS)



To receive free texts (SMS)\* to keep up to date about our work or service updates, such as having no water supply, in your area – please text **'Update' with your postcode** to **82228**.

Alternative formats of this leaflet can be made available free of charge. For information on Braille, large print, audio and a variety of languages, please call our Customer Helpline.

If you have a disability, medical condition or other reason where you may need additional assistance from Scottish Water then please contact us and we can add your name, address and requirements to our confidential Additional Support Register.

We record all calls for quality and training purposes.

\* For more info and T&Cs visit [www.scottishwater.co.uk/textterms](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/textterms)