b. If you do not have a floor drain, extend the hose to the outside of the house, or establish a line to a nearby laundry tub to remove the drained water from the heater.

5. Once the heater has been drained, be sure you close the valve at the base of the heater. (After all the pipes are drained, they should be protected.)

**NOTE:** If you own an electric hot water heater special precautions must be used in draining and filling an electric hot water heater. Electricity must be turned off before draining or refilling the water tank.

## For Homes with fire sprinkler systems:

- It is advisable that it is winterized by a professional in accordance with County guidelines.
- Turn off the valve above the sprinkler connection so that the sprinkler system remains active.
- It is advisable that the heat be maintained.

## Special Notes:

If you will be gone a short period of time, find a reliable neighbor to check the property daily.

*****DO NOT FORGET TO TURN ON VALVE TO THE FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM TO BE BACK IN SERVICE.**

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**www.wsscwater.com**
**Customer Relations Office**
**cust-relations@wsscwater.com**
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# #WinterReady

# A Guide to Winterizing Your Home

There are steps you can take to protect your home and your pipes from the cold that may reduce your energy cost for heating your residence. It's important to protect your household plumbing pipes and inside water meter from freezing or bursting.

It is a good idea to have your utilities' telephone numbers in an easy to find location.

**WSSC Emergency Call Center**
EmergencyCallCenter@wsscwater.com
301-206-4002

**WSSC Customer Contact Center**
301-206-4001

Water meters and interior plumbing pipes need to be located in an area with a minimum temperature of 55° F or above from November1 through April 1.

## Tips to help winterize your home:

- Repair broken windows, doors and walls and tightly close doors and windows to the outside;
- Insulate outside walls;
- Seal all air leaks in crawl spaces and basements. If your vents won't close, cover them from the inside with insulation, cardboard, plastic or newspaper;
- On extremely cold nights open cabinet doors to expose your pipes to your home's warmth;
- Let your kitchen or bathroom faucets drip slowly to keep water moving;
- Turn off the water to outside faucets, remove hoses and drain the pipes;

**NOTE:** Pipe Insulation only works if you have a heat source (air leaks are generally the cause of frozen pipes). When you are ready to insulate your pipes, inquire at your local plumbing or hardware store about materials to use.

Check to be certain that any water lines or fire sprinkler piping installed in the attic are properly insulated above the piping with a continuous R30 rating.

## If a pipe freezes:

- Completely open the cold and/or hot water faucet nearest the frozen pipe. This will relieve the pressure and reduce the chance of breakage;
- If you decide to thaw the pipe yourself, use a hand-held dryer—NEVER a torch or open fire;
- If you're not certain what to do, call a registered plumber.

## Winterize your home before an extended absence:

*You may prefer contacting a registered Master Plumber to do the work. If you do, be sure to obtain the plumber's WSSC license number and verify that it is current.*

These tips are provided to assist in winterizing your home if you will be away for any extended period. The purpose of winterizing your home is to remove water which can freeze within the pipelines and other areas. While nobody can guarantee against frozen or broken pipes, it is important that you take preventive winterizing steps.

If you chose to winterize your home before an extended absence, be aware that it is your responsibility if the water meter freezes.

(From the WSSC Plumbing and Fuel Gas Code -111.5.4 Protection: Commission water meters shall be protected from damage by freezing or physical abuse. The property owner shall be responsible for expenses related to meter repair, replacement, or loss due to neglect or damage).

## If you elect to turn off the water system, please read this important information.

1. Close the main water valve or supply to your home. This valve is usually located in the basement or laundry room of your home.
2. After the main valve has been securely turned off, open (or turn on) all inside faucets—kitchen sink, bathroom sinks, tubs, showers and laundry room basin—and all outside faucets. Also, be sure to remove garden hoses from the outside spigots. The purpose of opening all faucets is to drain all water from the pipelines within, and outside of, the home.
3. Turn off the heat source to the furnace/boiler and water heater.
   a. If the water heater is electric or oil, turn off the power at the switch.
   b. If the water heater is gas, you must turn off the gas valve. In most cases, you can turn off the furnace by switching off the electrical power supply.
4. Drain the water heater.
   a. Connect a hose to the drain at the bottom of the heater and allow the water to run into the floor drain.