

FREEZE PROTECTION

With freezing weather in the forecast, WCID 17 is reminding customers to protect their property and prevent property damage and uncontrolled water loss due to frozen or broken water pipes by following these tips.

Before Freezing Weather

- * Wrap all exposed pipes located outside or in unheated areas of the home.
- * Remove garden hoses from outside faucets.
- * Cover vents around the foundation of your home.
- * Know where your property owner's cut-off valve is located and how to use it. The valve is located adjacent to the water meter box under a 6" metal lid.

In Sub-Freezing Weather

- * Drip outside faucets 24 hours a day (5 drops per minute). This is not necessary unless temperatures are expected to be 28 degrees or below for at least 4 hours. (Be sure to turn off the faucets after the threat of freezing weather.)
- * Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.
- * In unheated garages, shut off water to washing machines. Water softeners should be drained and protected from freezing temperatures.
- * In sustained sub-freezing weather, let water drip slowly from inside faucets.
- * Take extra precautions to protect pipes that have frozen in the past.

If You Are Not Going To Be At Home

- * Shut water off at the property owner's cut-off valve.
- * Drain all outside water faucets if your house will be unoccupied for several days (leave outside faucets open).
- * Or, leave home heating system on at a low setting.
- * Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.
- * Renters and tenants may be responsible for personal property damage caused by broken water pipes during severe weather conditions. Residents should contact property management/landlord or maintenance personnel to locate property owner's cut-off valve and find ways to avoid pipe breakage during a freeze.

WCID 17 encourages all residents to turn off and drain outside irrigation systems during the winter months to help conserve water. However, businesses that continue to operate landscape irrigation systems are asked to shut their systems off in order to prevent possible freezing of pedestrian areas and damage caused by freezing conditions.

It's Winter, Time to Reset Your Irrigation Controller & Cut Back on Water Use

Does your lawn need watering over the winter? Yes, some, but not nearly as much as in the summer months. Evaporation rates are much lower in winter and grass is dormant, so you can set your irrigation system to water only twice a month OR LESS. If you know rain is coming, shut your system off completely or make sure your rain sensor prevents the system from operating. Save cash now and save on sewer service cost by using less water during the winter months.

Water Use During November, January and February is Used to Compute Sewer Bills - Remember to be aware of your household water consumption during the months of November thru February. WCID 17 averages household water usage during this time to calculate the residential wastewater bill amount for the following year. These months are used because these are the months which historically have the lowest usage because residents are not watering outside or watering very little. Wastewater rates are evaluated and adjusted annually each October.

No One Likes a Broken Water Pipe!!!

Every winter, many homeowners face the expense and inconvenience of frozen water pipes. Take a walk through your home and yard so you can cross that off your list of winter worries by taking a few simple precautions:

- Drain and insulate irrigation backflow valves (RPZ);
- Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses;
- Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas;
- Seal off access doors, vents and cracks;
- In severe cold weather, open the cabinet doors that have plumbing pipes inside to allow heat to them;
- Consider allowing a faucet to drip a small continuous stream or shut your water off at the master shutoff; and
- Make sure you can locate your master water shutoff.

What if it's too late? What if you wake up one morning and find the pipes have frozen anyway? Have the plumber's phone number handy. If you think you know where the freeze up occurred, and want to try thawing it yourself, the easiest tool is probably the hair dryer with a high heat setting. Wave the warm air back and forth over the pipe, not on one spot. Be careful, because the pipe may already be broken. It's not leaking because the water is frozen. When you thaw it out, the water could come gushing out. Be ready to turn off the water if necessary, or better yet, shut the valve off before thawing the pipe.

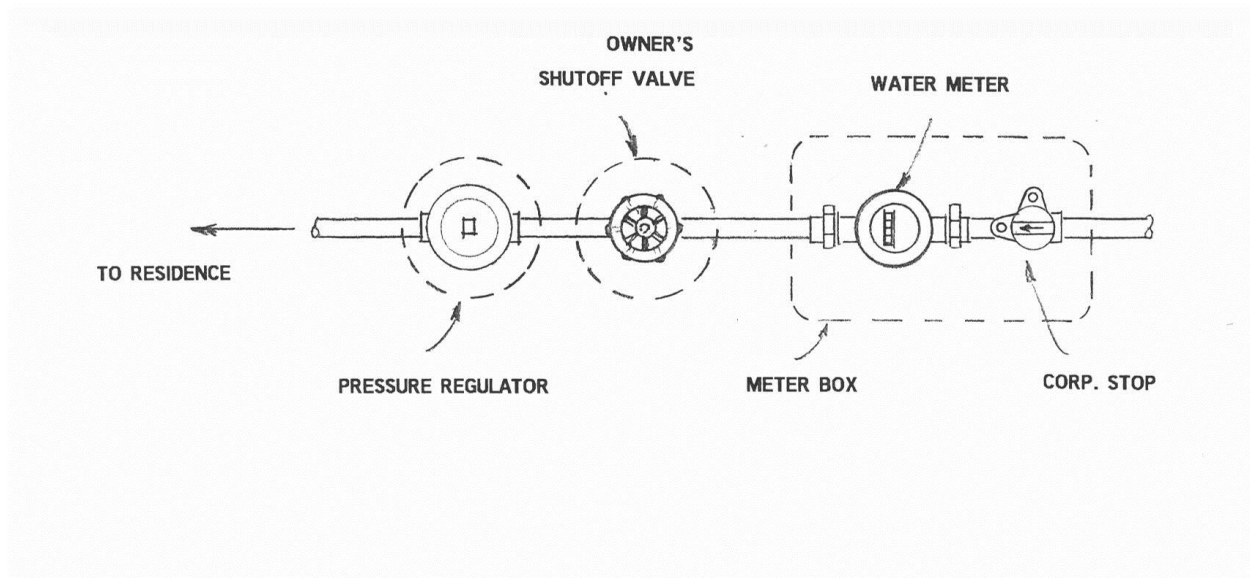
Tip from WCID 17

How Do I Shut My Water Off?

Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with your water supply shutoff valve. If an emergency situation ever develops in the future, where a leak in your home system may cause damage, you need to act quickly to stop the flow before you call a plumber.

Most residences are served from water mains located in the street right-of-way. Near your property line at one of your side property lines, will be a meter box with a lid that is set flush with the ground. Your water meter and a corp stop valve between the water main and the meter are inside. The corp stop and meter are not intended to be used by the property owner. Immediately adjacent to the meter box is a customer shutoff valve below ground level. There should also be a pressure regulator next. The customer shutoff is the valve you should identify now, so you can close it to shutoff your water if it becomes necessary.

Where irrigation systems are installed, other valves are usually found in a separate box. A schematic sketch of a typical residential set-up is shown below. If you do not have a customer shutoff valve, you should have your plumber install one so that you can shut your water off if you need to.



Each home is designed individually by the builder/plumber. You will want to familiarize yourself with the location and type of valves you have prior to any emergency.