



"RE-BUILDING THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEMS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY"

Sewerage & Water Board OF NEW ORLEANS

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Sewerage and Water Board Issues Freeze Suggestions – Freeze Alert

The National Weather Service has issued a freeze warning which is in effect for January 16th and January 17th, 2018. During this time, the Sewerage and Water Board offices and customer service telephone center will be closed. Customers should wrap or insulate exposed pipes and faucets or drain water lines completely in anticipation of the freeze.

If water is run as a last resort, allow only a SPAGHETTI THIN or 1/16th of an inch stream of water to run from the faucet furthest from where water enters your home until the temperature rises at daybreak. It is important that you shut off your faucets at daybreak.

Running water any longer than necessary will reduce water pressure throughout the city and make it difficult to fight fires. Running water will not protect toilets, ice machines, or other appliances where water cannot be continuously run.

To repeat, the Sewerage and Water Board offices are closed to customer service inquiries and will reopen on Thursday, January 18th. If you have an emergency such as a broken water or sewer line, call 52WATER (529-2837) and press one to speak with a representative in our Emergency Call Center.

For more information on protecting pipes, read below.

Protecting the Pipes in Your Home or Business

As temperatures drop each winter, concern grows that water can turn to ice in your home or business's plumbing system. Water expands when it freezes, an effect that can crack or break exposed pipes. And a broken pipe can cause serious damage after it thaws.

There are several precautions you can take to protect your pipes.

Turn Off and Drain Your Water

Locate the main water line coming into property from the street. Shut off the valve on the main line. In older structures, that may require turning off the water at the meter. You may need a large, T-shaped tool called a water key to accomplish that.

After closing the main valve, run all faucets to drain water from your pipes. Disconnect hoses to your washing machine and drain those faucets. Disconnect garden hoses.

While this option requires the most effort, it can be the best method for protecting your property from damage, conserving water and assisting the Sewerage & Water Board's mission to maintain water pressure throughout the city. During prolonged freezes, however, it may not be reasonable to go without running water for long periods of time.

Run Tap Water

Locate the main water line and valve. Turn on both the hot and cold faucets at the sink *farthest* from that valve. You don't need to run every faucet, and you need no more than a spaghetti-thin stream of water to best minimize the chance of water freezing in your pipes.

This method is only effective during temperatures below the freezing point: 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Valves and faucets should be turned off as soon as temperatures reach above freezing. Be aware that wind chill does not affect the temperature of pipes.

Running faucets may best protect your pipes during prolonged freezes, but it can also lead to higher water bills. The practice can also lead to citywide dips in water pressure when thousands of customers run their faucets simultaneously. Running your tap water will not protect toilets, ice machines, or other appliances where water is stored.

Extra Methods

- Open the doors to cabinets where your pipes are located to allow heat from the rest of the building to warm them.
 - Open interior doors to allow heat to pass from room to room.
 - Apply electrical heating tape to easily accessible pipes.
 - Wrap exposed pipes with foam rubber or fiberglass sleeves. You can also wrap pipes in at least an inch of rags or newspaper. Be sure to cover those materials with plastic or aluminum foil to keep them dry.
- SAFETY NOTE: DO NOT INSULATE WITH COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL WITHIN 2 FEET OF A GAS WATER HEATER.**
- Disconnect garden hoses.

After the Freeze

If you suspect a broken pipe, turn off the main water valve. Contact a plumber as soon as possible. The Sewerage & Water Board often receives numerous reports of broken pipes after freezes, but it can only respond to the most critical emergency situations.

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