



"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 from New Year's Eve (Sunday, December 31, 2017) and will continue through Thursday morning, January 4, 2018. With this in mind, the Sewerage & Water Board is suggesting that citizens in Orleans Parish 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 PENCIL LEAD THIN (1/16 inch) stream of water to run from faucets 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.

For more information on protecting pipes, read *Fighting the Freeze* below.

Fighting the Freeze

When the temperature drops below freezing, water flowing through your pipes may freeze. Freezing water expands and can cause pipes to crack and break. Not only are you without water, but when the water thaws it will flow freely from the broken pipe possibly causing damage, increasing water bills and requiring professional repair. If a freeze is expected, here are recommended precautions for both slab and raised houses.

Slab Houses - The only exposed pipe is usually the main line coming out of the ground and entering the house at the front or side. This pipe contains a "stop and waste valve" which opens and closes the water supply to the entire house. the best protection against a freeze is to insulate this valve, the pipe and any other outside faucets or plumbing (such as in an unheated garage). Use ready-made pipe insulation or wrap exposed pipes and valves with at least one inch of rags, towels or newspaper. Insulation should be firmly attached and covered with plastic bags or aluminum foil to keep it from getting wet and freezing.

Safety Note: DO NOT INSULATE WITH COMBUSTIBLE MATERIAL WITHIN 2 FEET OF A GAS WATER HEATER.

Raised Houses - Raised or pier houses, or slab houses, with pipes in the attic, have more pipe exposed to possible freeze damage. The same wrapping procedure suggested for slab houses should be used. Also make every effort to close off the open area under the house. Firmly attach tar paper, sheet metal, plywood, roofing felt, old doors, or anything that will stop the circulation of freezing air.

Run Water - If you expect a hard or prolonged freeze, allow a PENCIL LEAD THIN (1/16) inch stream of water to run from faucets until the temperature rises. Please do not do this any longer than necessary because it can increase your water bill, and it reduces city water pressure which can make it difficult to fight fires. Running water WILL NOT protect toilets, ice machines, or other appliances where water cannot be continuously run.

Turn Off Water - Residents of raised houses who find it hard to protect the pipes may want to consider draining them. This is done by turning off the main water valve (the "stop and waste valve"), then opening all hot and cold faucets. Also disconnect hoses from the washing machine and open those faucets. To properly drain hot water systems, a drain valve must be installed in the lowest part of the hot water piping system. You must also turn off the hot water heater. It is recommended that you check with the electric or gas company for instructions on turning off, and on water heaters.

Note: It is difficult to completely drain the piping system because water is often trapped in dips or sags in the pipes. The best protection is proper insulation, closing open areas under the house, and, in case of a hard freeze, running water.

After a freeze if you suspect you have a broken pipe you should turn off the main water valve and contact a plumber as soon as possible. Because of the large number of broken pipes reported after a hard or long freeze, The Sewerage & Water Board has manpower to respond to only the most critical emergency situations.

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