

Household Plumbing Tips

The City of Phoenix Water Services Department has almost 7,000 miles of water mains throughout the city. Phoenix Water Services is responsible for repairing all leaks, broken pipes, and water mains on the city, or street side of the water meters. Any leaks or breaks that occur on private property (the customer's side) are the responsibility of the property owner. The water meter is what separates city and private property in determining who is responsible for leak repairs.

Some of the same natural forces that can cause Phoenix's water mains to break can also cause pipes to burst in your home or business. Here are some tips to take to avoid costly damage.

Although Phoenix does not get near as cold in the winter as other parts of the country, we are still susceptible to freezing temperatures occasionally, which can catch us off-guard. If a freeze warning is issued, here are a few tips to help prevent your water lines from freezing:

- Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors.
- Close any inside valves that supply water to outdoor hose bibs.
- Open the outside hose bibs and allow the water to drain.
- Keep the outside valve open to allow any remaining water in the pipe to expand without causing the pipe to break.
- Keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate near the pipes.
- Allow a faucet to drip slightly to minimize freezing.
- When you think about covering your plants, think about how to protect your water pipes, too.
- Insulate attic and roof pipes

Check for exposed pipes:

Exposed pipes (see example A below), especially those made of plastic material such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC), are more susceptible to extreme temperatures, leaks and breaks. Our extreme temperatures in both the summer and, occasionally, winter put a toll on exposed plumbing. If you do have any exposed pipes, consider relocating them, insulating them properly or cover them with dirt when practical. It's best to consult a professional plumber for these services.

Example A



Exposed PVC pipe

If a Faucet or Pipe Freezes:

- If you turn on your faucets and nothing comes out, leave the faucets on and call a plumber.
- Try thawing a frozen faucet with a hair dryer – if there is no standing water in the area.
- To thaw a frozen pipe, heat water on your stove, and soak towels in the hot water, then wrap the towels around the cold sections of pipe. Start out as close to the faucet as possible and make sure the faucet is turned on so that as the ice melts, the water can drip out. If you cannot locate where the pipe is frozen, call a plumber.

If a Pipe Breaks:

- Turn off the water to your house at the main shut-off valve.
- Call a plumber.
- Leave faucets open until all repairs have been completed.

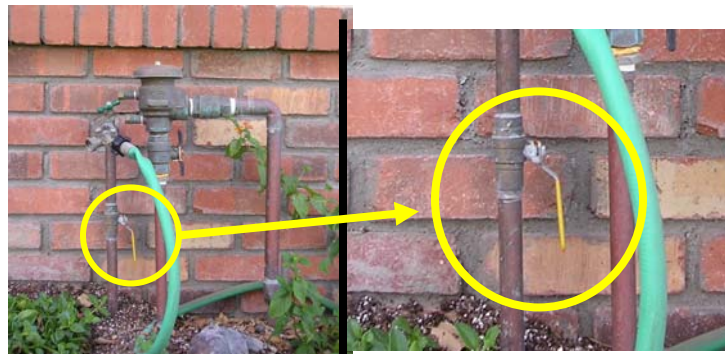
Know where your water shut-off valve is and test it regularly.

Even if you just need to make a few repairs, knowing how and where to turn off your water is important for every member of the household. For most houses, this valve is usually located at the front of the home, near a hose bib. Look for a pipe coming out of the ground and going into the house (see examples B and C below). There is usually a valve, knob, or switch on this pipe that turns the water off to your home.

Some older houses may have the shut off valve located at the rear of the property. Homes with basements may have the shut off valve located inside the basement or a crawlspace, on a wall facing the street.

If you or your plumber cannot find your water shut-off valve, which is often called a house valve, please call our Customer Services office at 602-262-6251, and we'll have a technician come out and turn the water off at the meter for you.

It's important for you to NOT shut your water off at the meter. This requires a special tool and you may be held responsible for any repairs to a damaged water meter.



Example B

Example C



Travel Tips

Whether you're only going to be gone overnight or for an extended period, lowering the heat too much inside your home may save on the heating bill, but it could create a disaster if a cold spell strikes.

- Set the thermostat in your house no lower than 55°F.
- Ask a friend or neighbor to check on your house daily to make sure it's warm enough inside to prevent freezing pipes.
- For long periods away from home, shut off the water to your house and hot water heater where it enters the heater.