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Contact: Jack Bragg
Contact Number (859) 578-9898 ext. 2008

NKWD Offers Cold Weather Tips to Protect Homes From Water Damage

Preventative Measures During Freezing Temperatures Can Keep Pipes Strong

Erlanger, KY – Frigid weather can cause real problems for homeowners, especially when the temperature dips into the single digits or colder. The Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) has information to help area homeowners prepare for the freezing winter temperatures and prevent costly plumbing repairs.

"Taking a few preventative steps to weatherproof your home against the cold will help protect your indoor plumbing against the threat of breaks, plus it will pay dividends on energy bills in the winter," said Jack Bragg, NKWD V.P. of Finance and Support Services. "It makes sense that homeowners should take every precaution to winterize their property and perform preventative maintenance to indoor plumbing."

NKWD encourages its customers to take the following precautions to reduce the risk of freezing pipes that can burst.

Before Freezing Weather

- **Know the location of your main water shut-off valve.** If a pipe freezes or bursts, shut the water off immediately. The main water valve is usually located along a basement wall next to the water meter or where the water supply enters the building.
- **Know the areas in your home where water pipes are most vulnerable to freezing** - crawl spaces, outside walls, outside faucets, unheated rooms, basements, garages or attics.
- **Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines.** Make your basement airtight by repairing broken windows, insulating walls and closing off crawl space vents and doors.
- **Seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations.** Areas where cable TV or phone lines enter the house are especially vulnerable and should be sealed with caulking to protect pipes.
- **If your home has a hot-water radiator** - bleed the valves by opening them slightly and close them when water appears to force any air pockets out that could cause problems in the radiator.

Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) serves approximately 81,000 customer accounts, or nearly 300,000 people in Campbell and Kenton Counties, portions of Boone, Grant and Pendleton Counties, and the Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International Airport.

- **Protect your pipes.** Wrap exposed water pipes with insulation or UL-listed heat tape. Newspaper or fabric may also work as temporary measures.
- **Drain water lines to outside faucets.** Disconnect garden and drain garden hoses and, if practical, use an indoor valve to shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets.
- **Keep your thermostat at 55 degrees or higher.**
- **Wrap your water heater in an insulation blanket.** While not really a danger for freezing, this can lower your heating bills.

In Sub-Freezing Weather

- **Drip outside faucets 24 hours a day** (5 drops per minute).
- **Open cabinet doors** under sinks adjacent to outside walls.
- **In unheated garages, shut water off to washing machines.** Turn off both the hot and cold water lines and disconnect them from the back of the washer. Place both lines in the drainpipe behind the washer and drip the faucets.
- **In sustained sub-freezing weather, let water drip slowly from inside faucets.** (Steady drip).
- **Take extra precautions to protect pipes that have frozen in the past.** You may already know that some of the pipes in your home are vulnerable due to past experience. You can start with those areas first.

If You Are Not Going To Be At Home

- **Cut 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).
- **Leave your home heating system on at a low setting that is above 55-degrees.** If you plan to be away for an extended period of time, ask a neighbor or family member to check the house regularly.
- **Open cabinet doors under sinks adjacent to outside walls.**

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