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Office of Communications

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For Immediate Release

Protect Your Home This Winter!

Tips to help prevent your water pipes from freezing during the winter season

December 21, 2009 — As temperatures begin to drop below the freezing level this week, the Cleveland Division of Water is reminding customers to take a few simple steps now to keep your water lines from freezing. Frozen pipes can cause damage to your property and cause a major inconvenience. They can also be expensive to repair. Most frozen lines occur on private property and are the responsibility of the homeowner.

Winterization Water Tips

- ***Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses.***
Detaching the hose allows water to drain from the pipe. Otherwise, a single hard, overnight freeze can burst either the faucet or the pipe it's connected to.
- ***Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas.***
If you have pipes in an unheated garage or a cold crawl space under the house, wrap the water pipes before temperatures decline. Hardware or building supply stores will have good wrapping materials available.
- ***Seal off access doors, air vents and cracks.***
Repair broken basement windows. Winter winds whistling through overlooked openings can quickly freeze exposed water pipes. Don't plug air vents that your furnace or water heater need for good combustion.
- ***Find the master shut-off valve.***
Most likely it's where the water line comes into the basement or crawl space from the street. If a pipe bursts anywhere in the house, this valve can turn off the water.
- ***Leave a pencil-lead-thin stream of water flowing.***
A small flow of water running from a bathroom or kitchen faucet during the worst of the cold spell can help prevent faucets or water service lines from freezing. The water should be left running through the pipe susceptible of freezing. You can also leave your cabinet doors open to allow the heat of the house to help keep your pipes from freezing. When away from home for several days, turn the water off and drain the outside faucets or leave the heating system inside your home on to keep the pipes warm.

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If freezing weather temperatures do cause a frozen water line on your property, you can contact a plumber or a private contractor to thaw your lines. If you choose to thaw them yourself, here are some tips to help:

Thawing Frozen Pipes

- *Apply heat in the general area by increasing the room temperature where the pipes are exposed (basement, crawlspace, recreation room).*
- *Place a portable heater in the room(s).*
- *Use a heating blanket/pad - available at most hardware or plumbing stores.*
- ***Do not stand in water while using electric appliances.***

If you have any questions about frozen water lines, please contact the Cleveland Division of Water at (216) 664-3060.