



## **TUCSON WATER'S WINTER PREP TIP SHEET**

### **Prevent water pipes and plumbing from freezing at your home or business.**

- ◆ Check your property for all exposed pipes and plumbing that carry water. This includes outdoor faucets, bibs, and valves.
- ◆ Use foam or wrap insulation (available from plumbing supply and home improvement stores) to protect pipes from freezing. Inspect existing insulation, especially in areas that are exposed to the elements.
- ◆ Temporary insulation (towels, blankets, newspaper, etc.) is better than nothing.
- ◆ Seal all areas that allow cold outside air to get in where pipes are located.
- ◆ Newer homes may have poly piping in the attic which may also need to be insulated.
- ◆ Remove, drain and store outdoor hoses inside.
- ◆ Let cold water drip from a faucet during times of extremely frigid temperatures.
- ◆ If your dishwasher has a timer on it, consider loading it and programming the cycle for the time prior to temperatures dropping below freezing. A similar effort can be made with indoor washing machines.

### **Shut down your evaporative cooler for the winter.**

- ◆ Disconnect the power supply.
- ◆ Add vinegar to the water in the bottom tray to dissolve mineral buildup.
- ◆ Drain the water from the cooler. Gently scrape buildup and cooler pad fibers with a wire brush and/or putty knife. Remove and inspect the cooler pad holder/trough for clogged holes.
- ◆ Dry the bottom tray thoroughly. Inspect for cracks. To help prevent rusting, coat tray with a quarter-inch of roofing cement or submarine sealer.
- ◆ Disconnect and drain the water line from the cooler to prevent this line from freezing.
- ◆ Cover the entire cooler with canvas or plastic to protect it. This can also help prevent cold air from entering your home.

### **Protect your irrigation system.**

- ◆ Consult your owner/operator manual for how to winterize your irrigation system.
- ◆ Insulate the main shut-off valve. If there is none, consider installing a shut-off valve as a preventative investment.
- ◆ Insulate all above-ground lines and piping.
- ◆ Consider shutting down automatic controller/timer and shutting off water supply to system. This may include draining remaining water and reprogramming operations.

### **Don't let your backflow prevention assembly freeze.**

- ◆ Use an insulation bag, covered enclosure, or pipe insulation wrap to protect the assembly.
- ◆ Wrap blankets or towels around an assembly on cold nights for a temporary solution.
- ◆ If a backflow prevention assembly is leaking, it likely has frozen. Contact your tester immediately for repair or replacement.

### **What to do if your water pipe has frozen:**

- ◆ Be patient. There is no quick remedy.
- ◆ Any area that is exposed is the likely point where freeze took place. There may also be more than one frozen spot.
- ◆ Pipe(s) will need to gradually warm up. Use something to blow warm air (hair dryer or vacuum cleaner canister) on the frozen section to begin the warming process. Wave the warm air back and forth on the pipe. Keep a faucet in your home in the 'on' position during thawing to prevent a slug of water from going through and causing more damage.
- ◆ Do not pour hot water over a frozen pipe or do anything that would cause a rapid rise in temperature (the difference in degrees between that of the frozen pipe and the material used to try to thaw it).
- ◆ Do not use open flame torches to thaw due to risk of fire or further damage to pipes.
- ◆ If there is a burst or water is already leaking from plumbing, turn off the water at the main supply valve to the home or business.

When you wrap pipes, the water will be cooler in the summer months and warmer in the winter months. This also conserves water because its running time is now lessened before it reaches the desired temperature.

If you have to turn off the water to your home or business, do so at the shut-off valve, not at the water meter. Learn where your shut-off valve is located in case you need to turn off the water in an emergency situation.

If you need the water meter valve turned off, call Tucson Water Customer Service at (520) 791-3242 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.) or at the after-hours/weekend/holiday emergency number at (520) 791-4133.

1. **Locate your water meter.** Most are located at the front of a home or business near the sidewalk or at in the rear, such as an alley.
2. **Remove the lid.** Behind the meter, on the side closest to your home or business, you should find either a gate valve or a ball valve. To close a gate valve, turn to the right; to close a ball valve, turn ¼ of the way to the right.
3. **If you cannot find or turn the valve, call Tucson Water.** We will respond as soon as staff are available. Call Customer Service at (520) 791-3242 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.) or at the after-hours/weekend/holiday emergency number at (520) 791-4133.
4. **Call a plumber.** If the break is on your property (between the meter and your home or business or inside your home or business), repairs are your responsibility.