

useful advice

- **keep a small emergency pack handy** in case of loss of power or other services - include items such as a torch, radio (with batteries), candles and matches. Keep it in an easily accessible place where you can find it when you need it, even in the dark.
- **keep a note of the telephone numbers** of your local plumber, electrician, council and insurer for emergency use (you may want to keep a copy in your emergency pack).
- **be a good neighbour:** when cold weather hits, keep an eye out for your neighbours, especially the frail and elderly or disabled.

the **key** to **water service control**



Various types of meter box covers and their access keys.



For more information on Clare Water Services call our
Customer Helpline on
(065) 6846427
or
visit our website at
www.clarecoco.ie

Prepare your Property for Winter

insulate and **protect** your home



This leaflet has been prepared by Clare County Council to inform householders of appropriate measures to undertake in the home in order to conserve water and provide adequate supply in times of extreme weather events.



Householders - Know your
water and heating systems

what you should do now?

- **find your stopcock:** This is where the water to your property can be turned off and on. Some domestic houses have a stopcock under the kitchen sink, and all properties have a stopcock on the supply line from the council or group scheme watermain. Typically this is located just outside the property boundary wall, or on the footpath in front of the property. Your local plumbing provider will be able to supply you with the appropriate tool to turn on and off the stopcock. Some domestic and all commercial properties have an integrated meter stopcock box. Ensure the stopcock is properly insulated.
- **heat:** warmth offers the best protection against frozen pipes, so leave your heating on, using a low setting in your home. Alternatively, if you're going away for a long time, turn off your water supply and drain the system - a qualified plumber should be able to give you advice about this. If your neighbours don't have a key for your home make sure they have contact details in case of an emergency.
- **insulate:** your water tank should be fitted with an insulation jacket or alternatively, the top and sides of the tank can be wrapped with suitable insulation material. Don't place loft insulation under the tank as this stops heat from the rooms below helping to keep the tank warm. If you have toilet cisterns, water tanks or pipes in exposed places or unheated outbuildings, make sure you insulate them. Suitable insulation material in various pipe diameters is available from your local hardware store and can be fitted within minutes.

reduce risk of frozen pipes

- 1 Ensure frost plug or suitable insulating material is placed inside the meter box below the meter lid. The frost plug creates a thermal barrier thus reducing the risk of freezing the services below. Ensure no obstacles protrude above the surface of the footpath causing a trip hazard.
- 2 Ensure no water is allowed to collect at the base of the meter chamber/meter box. This is prone to creating a local ice plug.
- 3 Do **not** run your taps as a anti-freezing measure - it will lead to water shortages.
- 4 Householder should map the location of the service pipe from the stopcock to kitchen sink - contact house builder for this information.

- 5 Regularly check your meter chamber for signs of any leaks on the customer side.
- 6 Householder should know the location of **all** stopcocks and internal valves for both heating and water systems and clearly label them.

if a pipe freezes...

- 1 Turn off the stop valve immediately and switch off your immersion heater and central heating.
- 2 Open all COLD taps to drain the system, but **NEVER** turn on the hot taps - your hot water cylinder may collapse if the pipes leading to it are frozen.
- 3 Call a qualified plumber if you are in any doubt about what to do.
- 4 All property owners should note that some heating systems require a constant top-up from the water supply and should not be operated when the property stopcock has been shut off /system drained down or the pipes have frozen. Contact your plumber to find out what sort of heating system you have in your property and how it operates.
- 5 Never attempt to thaw out frozen pipes by switching on your immersion heater or central heating boiler. Instead, check for leaking joints or bursts in the pipes. Then gently heat any frozen sections with a hairdryer or a heated cloth wrapped around the pipe. Never apply a direct flame.

if a pipe bursts...

- 1 Locate the stop valve which controls the water supply entering your home and turn it off immediately. The stop valve is often - but not always - located under your kitchen sink and normally closes by turning clockwise. Then switch off your immersion heater and central heating boiler. Open all hot and cold taps to drain them of any remaining water to minimise the damage.
- 2 Switch off your electricity supply at the mains if there's any chance that water could come into contact with electrical wiring or fittings. If you are in any doubt don't take a risk - call a qualified electrician.
- 3 If you live in a flat, you may have a shared water supply. Make sure you can get to the stop valve; this is normally located where the water supply enters the building. Then check with your neighbours that turning off the water has not affected their supply. It's important to remember to make sure your hot water system is refilled BEFORE you re-light your boiler or switch on the immersion heater.

remember:

Any pipework within your house boundary is your responsibility, and spending a little time on simple frost protection now could help you avoid trouble and expense during cold weather.

