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Prevent Property Damage During Freeze



Grand Island

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0 comments



Winter season means freezing temperatures, which can create a hazardous condition for water pipes in your home.

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According to Nick Suminski, Paul Davis Restoration of Central Nebraska office owner, every year the combination of winter storms and frozen pipes causes millions of dollars in water damage to homes and buildings.

"Any time the temperature drops below 32 degrees, there is the potential risk of frozen pipes, particularly indoor pipes located in poorly insulated areas such as the attics, crawl spaces and basements," said Suminski.

"Water damage can occur if cracked pipes are not caught quickly. This can be is a potential problem, particularly when people are away from their homes during the winter season," he said.

When water damage results from cracked pipes during freezing and subfreezing temperatures, Suminski offers the following tips for clean-up and recommends next steps according to the ICRC:

- Shut off the main water valve, if practical, and call a plumber or certified water damage restoration firm immediately. Report the loss to your insurance company or agent as required by your insurance policy.
- Mop up standing water on flooring surfaces to prevent slip/fall hazards. If the burst pipe is overhead, drain ceiling cavities by punching "weep" holes.
- Act quickly to prevent mold growth. Although it takes a few days to appear, mold thrives on wood, paper, particle board or even household soil, when stagnant air, moisture, and temperatures between 68 and 86 degrees are present.

• Wet clothing usually is salvageable. A 10-minute wash cycle in detergent and hot water should sanitize washable clothing and many household fabrics.

• Dry out the affected area before you rebuild. Professional water restorers have a variety of instruments to determine when a building is dry, to prevent on-going microbial growth.

• Beware of dishonest contractors targeting storm victims. Restoration companies should have liability insurance, have a business license and adhere to a strict code of ethics. They should also be certified by the ICRC. When approached by any company for water damage restoration services, ask to see the company's official ICRC certification. You may also call the ICRC hotline at (800) 835-4624 to confirm the certification of a company that has contacted you.

Suminski recommends the following to prevent and thaw frozen pipes:

- Wrap electrical heating tape on exterior pipes. Remove garden hoses from faucets.
- Cover pipes with foam rubber or fiberglass insulation and secure it with tape.
- Let cold and hot water faucets drip. Running water helps prevent freezing pipes and reduces pressure build up in them.
- Inside the home, open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to promote warm air circulation around plumbing.
- If the premises will be vacant for long periods of time, do not turn your heating system off. Set the thermostat at least 55°F.
- Locate the frozen pipe, if possible, and open a faucet. As the pipe thaws, running water aids the melting process.
- Apply heat to the frozen section using a hand-held hair dryer or portable electric space heater.
- If you are unable to locate or access the frozen pipe area, call a licensed plumber.
- If all else fails and you experience a burst pipe resulting in water damage, shut off the main water valve and contact a professional water damage restoration company.



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