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5 Tricks to Keep Your Pipes From Exploding this Winter

Even if you think they've already started to freeze.

New homeowners may have heard that winterization is important, but in the hubbub of your first year living in a home you own (finally!), it can be easy to overlook the need to prepare for the cold weather ahead. After all, it's just not something renters deal with; prepping pipes for winter is often the landlord's job.

Ideally, you should winterize your pipes in the fall, before winter seriously sets in. But if you've forgotten and all of a sudden you're in the middle of a deep freeze, there's still time to prevent disaster.

Here are some easy techniques to save your pipes from bursting:

1. Turn On Your Faucets

If the temperatures have dropped into freezing and intend to stay there, turning your faucets - both indoors and out - can keep water moving through your system and slow down the freezing process. There's no need to waste gallons of water: Aim for about five drips per minute.

2. Open Cabinet Doors

During cold weather, open any cabinet doors covering plumbing in the kitchen and bathroom. This allows the home's warm air to better circulate, which can help prevent the exposed piping from freezing. While this won't help much with pipes hidden in walls, ceilings, or under the home, it can keep water moving and limit the dangerous effects of freezing weather.

3. Wrap Your Pipes

If your pipes are already on their merry way towards freezing, wrapping them with warm towels might do the trick. You can cover them with the towels first and then pour boiling water on top, or use already-wet towels - if your hands can stand the heat (use gloves for this). This should help loosen the ice inside and get your system running again.



4. Pull Out Your Hairdryer

A hairdryer (or heat gun) can be a godsend when your pipes are freezing. If hot rags aren't doing the trick, try blowing hot air directly on the pipes. Important note: You don't want to use a blow torch or anything that produces direct flames, which can damage your pipes and turn a frozen pipe into an even worse disaster. You're trying to melt the ice - not your pipes.

5. Shut Off the Water if Pipes Are Frozen

Have your pipes already frozen? Turn off the water immediately. (Hopefully you know where the master shut-off is, but if not, now's the time to find it!).

Make sure to close off any external water sources, like garden hose hookups. This will prevent more water from filling the system, adding more ice to the pile, and eventually bursting your pipes - the worst-case scenario. This also will help when the water thaws; the last thing you want after finally fixing your frozen pipes is for water to flood the system - and thus, your home.

<https://www.houselogic.com/organize-maintain/home-maintenance-tips/how-to-prevent-pipes-from-freezing/>



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VALENTINE'S DAY

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Happy
New Year!

Wishing you good luck
and prosperity



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Home Sales Steady in January, Despite Low Inventory

The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) announced 400 homes* were sold in January, down 28.8% over the same period last year, which holds the record for best January results since LSTAR began tracking sales data in 1978. "When you take a look at the last 10 years, these results are right in line with the activity we expect in January," said 2018 LSTAR President. Average home sales price continues to rise across London and St. Thomas. "One of the other factors impacting home sales was weather, with the region experiencing harsher winter conditions compared to last January," said 2018 LSTAR President. "We also have to consider the tighter mortgage regulations that took effect on January 1st."

February 5, 2018 - London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®.



Breakdown of January Residential Sales

Year-to-date	January 2018	January 2017
Sales Activity	400	-28.8
Dollar Volume	\$133,369,538	-21.8
New Listings	623	-31.8
Active Listings	1,020	-27.7
Sales to New Listings Ratio	64.2	61.6
Months of Inventory	2.6	2.5
Average Price	\$333,424	9.8

Type	January 2018	January 2017
London CMA (includes St. Thomas & Surrounding Area)	400	-28.8
City of London	258	-31.6
London North	78	-39.1
London East	80	-29.2
London South	100	-26.5
St. Thomas	30	-36.2
Strathroy	18	-10.0
Middlesex County	30	-41.2
Elgin County	36	5.9

Economic Impacts of MLS® System Home Sales and Purchases in Canada and the Provinces, Altus Group Consulting, 2013.

6 Chilling Facts About Icicles That All Homeowners Should Know

They look nice. But, they don't play nice. Especially with your house.

Those beautiful, shiny icicles hanging from your roof are not cool.

They're a really, really bad sign that you may have an ice dam - a ridge of ice along the edge of your roof that can damage your house and your wallet.

But don't freak out. Just be in the know about these things, and you can save your budget from hypothermia this winter.

1. They'll Destroy Your Roof's Insulation

So here's how ice dams work: When heat escapes through your roof, it melts the snow up there.

Then it gets cold again, and that water freezes along the ridge of your roof. If this happens enough, the ice builds up into an ice dam.

Once the ice dam is established, when the warmer air melts more snow, that water gets trapped behind the ice dam and just hangs out there in a puddle.

Water is not supposed to puddle up on your roof. It can seep down through the roof (science calls this a "leak", FYI), and turn your insulation into a wet mess.

But that's only the beginning . . .

2. They'll Infest Your House With Mold

Once your insulation is that soggy mess, something worse could be lurking.

MOLD! Ugh. It's nasty. And it's expensive to make go away.

Fittingly, the way to prevent it is (ta-da!) good insulation. So your roof doesn't get too warm in the first place.

"Most ice dams are caused by a warm attic, which can be fixed if people would just call the professionals in," says Joe Palumbo of ice mitigation company The Ice Dam Guys.

Having sufficient insulation is key, but keep in mind that a well-insulated attic has to be balanced with good ventilation. An attic shouldn't be more than 15 degrees hotter than rest of the house - if it is, you need better ventilation.

Not sure about your insulation/ventilation balance? You can find a home energy auditor through the Residential Energy Services Network, or - even better - check with your local energy utility, as many of them offer free audits to customers.



3. They'll Send Water Pouring Down Your Walls

Count yourself lucky if you caught the ice dam in time so that moldy insulation was the only problem.

A really bad leak will continue right through the insulation to destroy walls, ceilings, flooring - pretty much everything it touches (and spread that nasty mold around!).

That's a great way to wave goodbye to the Dream Deck Savings Account you've been working on for years.

One way to ensure you never get a catastrophic leak is to make sure there's never enough ice or snow up there to melt into one.

This can be done with special roof rakes (that's a thing!) if your roof is low enough, or by calling in pros who know how to climb around on roofs in the snow without breaking themselves.

4. They'll Rip Down Gutters and Pull Roof Shingles Loose

Ice dams weigh a ton (literally!).

Which means all that weight can tear gutters away from your house, pull shingles loose from your roof, and generally cause stress on your home's exterior.

But if there's no ice, there's no ice damage.

So make sure your home's insulated - and well ventilated (see #1) - and you shouldn't have a problem.

But if you see one forming, try this DIY trick: Fill pantyhose with an ice-melt product, and place on freezing-prone points of your roof.

Your home won't win any beauty pageants, but in the short term, this DIY trick can save you some serious grief.

For full article go to: <https://www.houselogic.com/organize-maintain/home-maintenance-tips/ice-dam-prevention/>