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## Are Your Water Meter & Pipes Protected from the Cold?

*Iowa American Water offers helpful tips to help you avoid the unwanted expense and frustration of a frozen water meter or broken pipe*

**Davenport, Iowa (November 9, 2017)** – Winter weather is just around the corner, so Iowa American Water reminds homeowners that now is the time to safeguard their home plumbing to prevent damage from frozen and burst pipes and water meters that bring costly plumbing repairs and frozen water meter replacement fees along with headaches and unexpected expenses for homeowners.

“We want to remind customers now when Mother Nature is still cooperating that sub-freezing temperatures for an extended period can cause pipes in vulnerable areas to freeze and burst resulting in costly damage,” said Mary Jane Midgett, director of operations. “By taking the proper preventive steps now, customers can avoid frozen pipes and water meters and the need to make expensive repairs to damaged plumbing inside and outside of the home.”

Iowa American Water encourages residents to take the following precautions to reduce the risk of freezing and bursting pipes:

### **Before frigid weather sets in:**

- Know what areas of your home, such as basements, crawl spaces, unheated rooms and outside walls, are most vulnerable to freezing.
- Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines by repairing broken windows, insulating walls, closing off crawl spaces and eliminating drafts near doors.
- Know the location of your main water shut-off valve. If a pipe freezes or bursts, shut the water off immediately.
- Protect your pipes and water meter. Wrap exposed pipes with insulation or use electrical heat tracing wire; newspaper or fabric might also work. For outside meters, keep the lid to the meter pit closed tightly and let any snow that falls cover it. Snow acts as insulation, so don't disturb it.
- Customers in mobile homes should make sure the plumbing under their home is protected from the cold. Properly insulate your pipes and/or plug in your heat tape to prevent freezing of your plumbing and/or water meter.

### **When temperatures are consistently at or below freezing:**

- If you have pipes that are vulnerable to freezing, allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep pipes from freezing. The cost of the extra water is low compared to the cost to repair a broken pipe.
- Open cabinet doors to expose pipes to warmer room temperatures to help keep them from freezing.

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**If your pipes freeze:**

- Shut off the water immediately. Don't attempt to thaw frozen pipes unless the water is shut off. Freezing can often cause unseen cracks in pipes or joints.
- Apply heat to the frozen pipe by warming the air around it, or by applying heat directly to a pipe. You can use a hair dryer, space heater or hot water. Be sure not to leave space heaters unattended, and avoid the use of kerosene heaters or open flames.
- Once the pipes have thawed, turn the water back on slowly and check for cracks and leaks.
- When you are away:
- Have a friend, relative or neighbor regularly check your property to ensure that the heat is working and the pipes have not frozen.
- A freeze alarm can be purchased for less than \$100 and will call a user-selected phone number if the inside temperature drops below 45 degrees.

A frozen water meter can lead to expensive home plumbing repairs and meter replacement charges as outlined in the table below. Act now to prevent cold weather from taking a bite out of your home plumbing and your wallet.

Meter Size	Replacement Cost
5/8"	\$115
1"	\$165
1-1/2"	\$270
2"	\$325

**REPORT LEAKING PIPES**

Iowa American Water also advises that sub-freezing temperatures can cause aging water mains to break and cause unsafe driving conditions. If you see a leak, or if your water service is disrupted or you experience low pressure, please contact our customer service center at 1-866-641-2018 to report an emergency. For general inquiries, call 1-866-641-2108 between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**About Iowa American Water**

Iowa American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest investor-owned water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water services to approximately 212,000 people. With a history dating back to 1886, American Water is the largest and most geographically diverse U.S. publicly-traded water and wastewater utility company. The company employs more than 6,700 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater and other related services to an estimated 15 million people in 47 states and Ontario, Canada. More information can be found by visiting [www.amwater.com](http://www.amwater.com).

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