

## Emergency Water Sources

Sometimes when water service is disrupted, there are other sources of water, both in the home and out. These sources include:

### Emergency Indoor Water Sources

- Ice cubes, as long as they were frozen with untainted water.
- Water heater — To drain water from the tank, first turn off gas or electricity to the tank. Second, open the valve at the top of the tank or turn on a hot water faucet somewhere in the house. Put a clean container under the tap at the bottom of the water heater and fill as needed.
- Juices, sodas and other drinks you already have in your house.

### Emergency Outdoor Water Sources

If you need to find water outside your home, you can use these sources once they are disinfected:

- Rainwater
- Streams, rivers & other moving bodies of water
- Ponds and lakes
- Natural springs

Avoid water with floating material, an odor or dark color. Use saltwater only if you distill it first. You should **NEVER** drink floodwater. **Be sure to disinfect all outdoor water by:**

- Boiling water for at least 5 minutes
- Using bleach: use 8 drops of UNSCENTED household bleach per 1 gallon of water **if the water is clear. If the water is cloudy**, use 16 drops of bleach per gallon. Mix well and let sit for 30 minutes.
- Use water purification tablets according to the instructions on the bottle.

Disinfected water can be used for one week if stored in a clean, closed container.

Also, having essential supplies on hand will make you and your family prepared for emergencies, whenever they might come. For more information on emergency preparedness, visit the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue Web site at [www.tvfr.com](http://www.tvfr.com) and click on “Community Safety.”

## Waterline Main Breaks

Although water main breaks are rare, they do occur from time to time. When they do happen, we immediately send our crews out to the leak and work until the leak is fixed.

Water can sometimes be re-routed to minimize impacts. However, re-routing water can take time, it’s not as easy as “flipping a switch”. There may be an interruption of your water service. The best thing to do is be patient, leave faucets turned off, and avoid the area where the leak occurs, if possible.

Once the leak has been repaired, there may be air and/or sediment in your water system, which may cause discolored water. The water is still treated and is safe to drink. To remove the discoloration, run your bathtub water on cold for about two minutes or until the water is clear. If the bathtub water is clear, the sediment has passed.



- Once the sediment has passed, run the water in all of your baths and showers for 5 minutes. Run each faucet inside and outside your home for at least one minute.
- If the water is still discolored, wait for about 20 minutes and repeat the process.

**Do not** do laundry during a water main leak. When the leak is fixed, the next load of laundry should be dark colors. Light laundry might be stained by discolored water that may still be in the pipes.

## Tualatin Valley Water District



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# Cold Weather Preparedness



**Protection and Prevention  
Are The Keys To Keeping  
Your Water Running  
In Cold Weather**

# Cold Weather Preparedness

With the onset of winter, unpredictable weather can sneak up on you and wreak havoc on unprepared water pipes. Icy winds and dipping temperature can do a lot of damage to your home by freezing pipes and leaving you without flowing water. Before you have an emergency, there are many precautions you can take now to help minimize later impacts:

## Before Freezing Weather

- ❄️ Disconnect and drain hoses from outside faucets.
- ❄️ Turn off and drain irrigation systems and backflow devices. Wrap backflow devices with insulating material.
- ❄️ Wrap outside faucets with insulation, newspaper or cardboard.
- ❄️ Cover foundation vents with foam blocks, thickly folded newspaper or cardboard.
- ❄️ Insulate pipes in unheated areas, such as the garage, crawl space or attic.
- ❄️ Show household members how to turn off water to the house in case of emergencies.
- ❄️ If your home will be unoccupied for an extended period of time, you may want to seek additional information about winterizing your home.

## During Freezing Weather

- ❄️ Open cupboard doors under sinks, (especially where plumbing is in exterior walls), to let interior heat warm the pipes.
- ❄️ Temporarily, keep a steady drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter. This keeps water moving, making it less likely to freeze.
- ❄️ If you are away for any length of time, shutting off the water can reduce the chances of broken pipes. Leave the heat on at least 55 degrees. Shut off water to the house and open all faucets to drain pipes; flush the toilet once to drain the tank, but not the bowl. Call TVWD at (503) 642-1511 to turn off water at the meter.
- ❄️ Be a good neighbor. If a neighbor is away or you are next to a vacant house, notify TVWD if you see a suspected leak.
- ❄️ Check on others to make sure they're OK.

## If Your Pipes Freeze

- ❄️ **NEVER thaw a frozen pipe with an open flame.** You may start a fire and your pipe might will burst. Use hot air from a hair dryer, the exhaust from a vacuum cleaner, or a **closely monitored** heat lamp or electric heater.
- ❄️ If your lines are frozen, assume they may be broken or split. Purchase leak clamps at a hardware or plumbing store. Be ready to shut off your water (see below) in a hurry when the line thaws.
- ❄️ If there is no water at all to your home, the problem may be at the street. If the water service is frozen at the meter or the service to the water main, it is TVWD's responsibility. Call us at (503) 642-1511 24 hours a day.
- ❄️ If your pipes break, shut off the water at the shut-off valve.

## Shutting Off Your Water

If a water pipe broke in your home, could you find the shut off valve? Know where it's located before you have an emergency. There should be a valve near the house. Look in the following places:

- In the crawl space or basement, where the water line enters the home.
- In the garage where the water line enters the wall or ceiling, near the water heater or laundry hookup.
- Outside near the foundation, often protected by a concrete ring or clay pipe.

You might want to have a shutoff valve installed if you can't locate one. If you have an emergency and need help shutting off your water at the meter or locating your meter, please call TVWD at (503) 642-1511.



Your water shutoff can be one of many different types of valves. You can also shut it off at your backflow device.