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WINTER FREEZE PRECAUTIONS

Freezing temperatures are here again. Tonto Hills has had temperatures as low as 19 degrees Fahrenheit in winter, causing broken pipes that were:

- Costly to fix
- A mess to clean up
- A huge and expensive waste of water

Before It Gets Cold

- Insulate exposed pipes in your attic, crawl spaces, and any exterior or unheated garage. Remember PVC pipes connecting to the irrigation system, as well as any valve boxes.
- Consider using heat tape or thermostatically-controlled heat cables to wrap pipes. (Use UL-approved products and follow manufacturer instructions.)
- Seal leaks that allow cold air inside near where pipes are located. Look for air leaks around electrical wiring, dryer vents, and pipes. Use caulk or insulation to keep cold out.
- Disconnect garden hoses. Consider shutting off the irrigation system.
- Make sure your household knows how to close the main water valves (both at the meter and the house).

After It Gets Cold

- Trickle water, about a drop per second, from outside wall faucets.
- Keep thermostats set at the same temperature both day and night.
- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to get to enclosed pipes near outside walls.

Before You Leave Town

- Set the thermostat no lower than fifty-five degrees. If the water is turned off to the house, turn off the water heater and circulating pump.
- Ask a friend or neighbor to check your house daily to ensure it is warm enough and to inspect for leaks inside and outside.



- Consider draining/blowing out the water system. If you have a fire protection sprinkler system, this will deactivate the system.
- To drain the system:
 - Shut off one or both of the main valves (at the house and/or at the meter, whichever is most appropriate for your particular system).
 - Turn on every faucet (both hot and cold), until water stops running.
 - Since the pipes will then hold mostly air, they should not freeze, but to be safe consider using air pressure to force water from the elbow joints.
 - If you are unsure how to do this, get professional help.

If Your Pipes Freeze

- If water won't flow from faucets, leave them partly open and call a plumber. Watch the faucets until the plumber arrives. If they begin flowing, close the faucet after the flow is constant.
- You might be able to thaw a pipe using a hair dryer. Start with the area closest to the faucet and work upstream. Never use a torch or flame. Do not use hair dryers or any electrical appliance near standing water.
- Inspect the house perimeter after temperatures increase. An unobservable cracked pipe can become a gusher.
- If the water pipes have burst, turn off the water at the main valve (at the house or at the meter, as appropriate). Call a plumber. Call our Superintendent at 480-745-1427 to help shut off the valve at the street.