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FREEZE MITIGATION TIPS

STRATEGIC CLAIM® CONSULTANTS

Useful information that may help you prevent a loss due to the bursting of a frozen water pipe or fire suppression pipe when temperatures are expected to drop below freezing.

8 HELPFUL TIPS TO PREVENT LOSS DURING A FREEZE

1. Stay prepared to mitigate damage: Have multiple people on property that have access and know how to shut off the water.
2. Maintain the right temperature: If the sprinkler system pipes are located in a heated building, maintain a temperature of at least 40 degrees Fahrenheit at all times.
3. Optional heat tape: For pipes that are easily accessible, you can use heat tape or heat cables. These devices warm the pipes to keep them from freezing.
4. Check for gaps or cracks: Inspect your building for any gaps or cracks near the location of the pipes. Sealing these areas can prevent cold air from reaching the pipes.
5. 55°F or higher: Even when your business is closed overnight, keep the heat running inside the building. Maintaining a consistent interior temperature above 55 degrees Fahrenheit can prevent freezing.
6. Keep it running: If pipes are susceptible to freezing, let the faucet drip slightly. This ensures a constant flow of water which relieves built-up pressure and decreases the chances of freezing.
7. Remove the potential of freezing: If your business will be closed for an extended period, consider draining your water system of its supply.
8. Airflow is key: Keep doors open inside your business, especially those in unheated areas, to allow heat to circulate evenly.

More detail →

FIRE SUPPRESSION PIPE BREAKS

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As temperatures drop during the winter months, freezing temperatures can pose a significant risk to fire suppression systems. A burst fire suppression pipe can lead to costly water damage, system malfunctions, and safety risks. It isccrucial to take proactive steps to prevent pipe bursts and ensure that the fire suppression system remains fully operational in cold weather.

Why fire suppression pipes burst in winter
Fire suppression systems, including sprinklers, rely on pressurized water pipes to function properly. If these pipes are exposed to freezing temperatures and the water inside them freezes, the expanding ice can crack or rupture the pipes. Once temperatures rise, thawing water can leak out, causing extensive damage to walls, ceilings, and property. A burst pipe also jeopardizes the integrity of the fire protection system, which could delay emergency response times in the event of a fire.

1. **Inspect and insulate vulnerable areas:**
   Identify and insulate areas where fire suppression pipes are most vulnerable to freezing. These typically include pipes located in unheated or poorly insulated spaces, such as attics, basements, crawl spaces, and exterior walls. Use pipe insulation sleeves, foam covers, or heating cables to protect these areas from extreme cold.

2. **Ensure proper building insulation:**
   Adequate insulation is essential to maintain consistent temperatures within the building. Ensure that attic spaces, basements, and exterior walls are properly insulated to keep the environment around the pipes above freezing. Special attention should be given to areas where water pipes pass through external walls or ceilings.

3. **Maintain a minimum temperature:**
   In unoccupied or seasonal buildings, it is critical to maintain a minimum indoor temperature (typically above 40°F or 4°C) during the winter months, especially in common areas and rooms with sprinkler systems. Use thermostats or heating systems to regulate temperatures in areas where fire suppression pipes are located.

FIRE SUPPRESSION PIPE BREAKS

4. **Check for leaks and vulnerabilities:**
   Perform a thorough inspection of the fire suppression system for any leaks, signs of wear, or weaknesses in the pipes. Corroded, cracked, or poorly fitted pipes are more susceptible to freezing and should be repaired or replaced promptly. Ensuring that the system is in good working order can prevent future problems.

5. **Consider antifreeze systems for fire suppression:**
   For areas with extreme cold or high risk of freezing, consider upgrading the fire suppression system to an antifreeze model. Some fire suppression systems are designed to use a non-toxic antifreeze solution in the pipes to prevent freezing. However, this should only be done in compliance with local fire codes and regulations.

6. **Regularly test and maintain the system:**
   Even during the winter months, regularly test and maintain the fire suppression system to ensure it is operational. This includes checking sprinkler heads, valves, and pressure levels. Ensure that any shut-off valves are accessible and that they function properly in the event of an emergency.

7. **Coordinate with emergency services and insurers:** It's important to inform emergency services and your building's insurance provider of your winter preparedness plan for the fire suppression system. If your system uses antifreeze or other unique components, make sure these details are clearly communicated to all relevant parties in case of an emergency.

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Emergency response plan for frozen pipes

In the event of suspected frozen pipes, it's important to act quickly:

- Do not attempt to thaw pipes using open flames (e.g., torches or heat guns), as this can pose a fire risk.
- Use space heaters or hair dryers to gently thaw frozen pipes or call a professional plumber or fire protection technician.
- Shut off the water supply to the affected area immediately to prevent leaks and water damage if a pipe has already burst.

Conclusion

Preventing fire suppression pipe bursts requires foresight and proactive measures. By insulating vulnerable pipes, maintaining proper building temperatures, and performing regular system inspections, you can reduce the risk of costly damage and ensure that the fire suppression system remains effective in an emergency. Taking these preventive actions can safeguard the property during the harsh winter months.

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PIPE BURSTS IN WINTER

Preventing pipe bursts in winter

Cold weather can cause water pipes to freeze and burst, leading to costly repairs and damage. You can protect your property and minimize the risk of pipe bursts this winter by adhering to the steps in this document.

Why do pipes burst in cold weather?

When temperatures drop, water in the pipes can freeze and expand. This creates pressure that can cause the pipes to crack or burst, resulting in leaks, water damage, and expensive repairs. By taking simple precautions, you can help protect your business and avoid the inconvenience and costs of frozen pipes.

Stay warm and stay safe this winter!

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For questions or concerns, or if you need assistance, call our team for guidance:

844.701.9995