

## Common faults with gas heating

### Frozen condensate pipes

Modern boilers produce significant volumes of condensate (water) which normally discharges into a gully. In very cold weather this condensate may freeze particularly where it discharges to an external gully. To prevent this you can place a hot water bottle on the pipe close to where it discharges (this advice also applies to some oil boilers). In exceptional circumstances we may need to disconnect the condensate pipe internally and allow it to drain into a basin. The basin will need to be emptied regularly and the pipe reconnected when the weather improves.

### Frozen gas regulators

There may be a small amount of water vapour in the gas regulator which if it freezes will cause the gas supply to your boiler to fail. You should cover your meter with a towel or old clothing to provide some insulation. Place a hot water bottle on the regulator (grey metal fitting on the top left hand side of the meter) and remove once it has thawed any ice. Dry the regulator immediately.

### Home Contents Insurance

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to insure your home contents. Choice insures the buildings only. Any damage to your property, regardless of the cause, is not insured by Choice.

### Help your neighbour

During extreme weather conditions please check on your neighbours if they are elderly, have a disability or are housebound as it can be a difficult time for them to get out and about. A friendly visit from a neighbour will be appreciated.

Further advice is available from your gas supplier and water service which may include helpful hints and video tutorials.

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For all your  
housing enquiries  
Services Centre

**0300 111 2211**



Protecting  
your home  
from cold  
weather



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# Protecting your home from extreme cold weather is vital during the winter months

**This information will help you prepare and assist you if you experience any problems during the cold weather.**

It is important to recognise that when there is extreme weather and subsequent high call volume we will prioritise repairs such as complete heating failure where there are young children, elderly or people with medical or mobility problems. Due to call volume, access difficulties or where other agencies are responsible, repairs may not be completed within the designated time frames. Once you have reported your repair, try to avoid repeat calls to our Services Centre. Our contractors will deal with repairs issued in order of priority.

We appreciate that this may be a difficult time for tenants and your co-operation is very much appreciated.



## Prevent your pipes from freezing

The following tips will help stop the pipes in your home from freezing:

- Turn your heating on for short periods throughout the day and night.
- Leave the heating on at a low level when you are away from home. This can be done by lowering the main heating control thermostat and turning thermostatic radiator valves down but not off. Consider leaving a key with a family member, friend or neighbour who can check your home regularly.
- Don't leave taps dripping or running as the water in waste pipes can freeze.
- Allow hot air from the main house into the loft, this may mean opening a trap door during extreme cold periods.
- Open the cupboard under the sink to ensure warm air can circulate round the piping.
- Ensure that all doors throughout the house are slightly open for warm air to flow around the house.

## How to deal with frozen pipes

Most frozen pipes are found in the roof space and below sink units.

- Turn the water supply off at the stopcock. The stopcock is a valve for turning off and on the cold water system in your home. Stopcocks are usually found in your kitchen below the sink unit. However, in some houses the stopcock is found in a front or back hall. Please ensure that you know where the stopcock is located. You can shut off the supply by turning the stopcock in a clockwise direction. To turn the supply back on, turn the stopcock in an anti-clockwise direction.

**If you wish to find out more please contact 0300 111 2211**

- To thaw frozen pipes put hot water bottles or a thick cloth soaked in hot water over the frozen pipe. A hairdryer at its lowest setting can also be used. Please be careful not to warm the pipes too quickly as this may lead to the pipe bursting. It is important that you thaw along the pipe starting from the end nearest the tap.

## What to do if a pipe bursts

- Turn off the stopcock by turning it clockwise
- Try to block the escaping water with thick cloths such as towels to stop the leak spreading.
- Turn off your central heating, immersion heater and any other water heating systems. If the central heating uses solid fuel, let this die out.
- Once you have shut down your water heating, turn on all your taps to drain the system. Flushing your toilet several times may help.
- If water leaks near anything electrical switch off the mains electricity immediately. If the mains switch is wet, don't touch it as you risk electrocution.
- If water has been leaking for some time and ceilings are bulging, the room may not be safe to enter. If the ceiling has started to bulge or water is leaking through a ceiling, you could punch a small hole in the ceiling with a screwdriver. Use a bucket or basin to collect dripping water.

**To report burst pipes please contact the Choice Services Centre on 0300 111 2211.**

## How can I find out more?

For further information please contact Choice at:

Choice Housing Ireland Limited

Leslie Morrell House, 37-41 May St, Belfast, BT1 4DN

Tel: 0300 111 2211

Email: [enquiries@choice-housing.org](mailto:enquiries@choice-housing.org)