

Don't freeze up this winter

Cold weather makes us think about getting our homes ready for winter.

We have lots of useful advice, and some top tips from one of our Maintenance Officers, Robert McCusker, who works in our Lisburn office.

He says "It's important that **your heating system** is working properly. We have a legal obligation to service your boiler every year, so please ensure you allow contractors access to service the boiler - it will save you money and heat your home more efficiently.

Know how your heating controls operate, and it comes on when you want it to. You can also bleed your radiators to ensure they are heating effectively.



Maintenance Officer Robert McCusker

"Everyone has a higher risk of falling in winter, particularly the elderly and less mobile. Be **aware of any standing water** around the outside of your home in case it freezes and becomes a slip hazard. Dripping water or an active overflow can also cause problems, contact your local office if this happens."

Robert also advises "Should any tenant have issues or **concerns about the electrics** in their home, let us know straight away. Issues such as continually blowing bulbs or fuses should be checked professionally."

All our maintenance officers are happy to help ensure you are safe and warm in your home this winter. If you have any concerns please telephone 03448 920 901.

Housing Executive

FIND YOUR STOPCOCK



The stopcock is used for turning the cold water off and on. When you turn the stopcock clockwise the water supply will stop. 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. **IT IS IMPORTANT YOU KNOW WHERE THE STOPCOCK IS.**

DON'T FREEZE UP!

During spells of severe cold it is possible for water pipes in your home to freeze. This may lead to a burst pipe when the thaw sets in. This can damage your home and belongings. Here are some simple precautions you can take to reduce the risk, or deal with burst pipes.



HELP PREVENT YOUR PIPES FROM FREEZING



- Keep your home as warm as possible, even when you are out, by setting the heating to come on for short periods;

- If you can, lift the trap door to the roof space slightly to allow warm air to circulate;
- Open the doors to the sink unit to allow air to circulate round the pipes;
- Allow warm air to circulate round the house by opening doors to all rooms;
- If you are away from home, ensure the heating comes on for regular intervals and ask someone to check regularly for frozen pipes.



DEALING WITH FROZEN PIPES

- Turn the water off at the stopcock;
- Protect everything around the pipe that appears to be frozen to avoid damage if it bursts;
- Open the tap nearest to the part of the pipe you think is frozen so the water can flow through when it has thawed;
- Thaw the ice in the pipe with a hot water bottle or hairdryer (taking care to keep it well away from any water), beginning from the tap end and working back towards the cold water tank;
- Never use a heat gun or blow torch;
- If you have a solid fuel room heater, or an open fire with a back boiler, you should let your fire go out;
- If you have oil, gas or wood pellet boilers you should reduce your water usage, but you can continue to run your heating at a low setting.



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE NO WATER?

If your water supply fails, there may be a burst pipe in your home, or a leak in the mains system outside your home. If there is water at the kitchen cold tap then the mains supply is working. If you think it is a mains problem, call NI Water on 03457 440 088 or email: waterline@niwater.com



IF YOU HAVE A BURST PIPE

- Turn off the water at the stopcock;
- Turn on all the cold taps and collect water in the bath or sink to use for flushing the toilet later;
- Block the escaping water with towels;
- If the water has come into contact with electrics the electricity should be turned off at the mains if it is safe to do so. If water has come into contact with the Mains Box, do not attempt to touch it and do not use any electrical equipment in the house;
- Turn off your gas or oil heating systems;
- If you have a solid fuel room heater or an open fire, let it go out.



CHECK ON NEIGHBOURS IF YOU CAN

Remember, everyone in your locality will be feeling the effects of bad weather, and some people may be anxious or feel isolated. Try to stay in contact with your neighbours and help out if you can.

Housing Executive

CONTACT US



Ring our 24 hour repair line

03448 920 901

Text Relay

18001 03448 920 901

for further advice
or in an emergency



Report your repair online at

www.nihe.gov.uk

or OUT OF HOURS, email
our emergency services unit
emergency.services@nihe.gov.uk



Text

076 2480 5594

starting your message with
the word 'REPAIR' and
remembering to include
your address