



Be Winter-Wise: Winterize Your Home

Twain Harte Community Services District's (THCS D) customers lose hundreds of thousands of gallons of water every year due to pipes that break in freezing weather. You can help prevent the expense and inconvenience of frozen or broken water pipes by taking a few simple steps now.

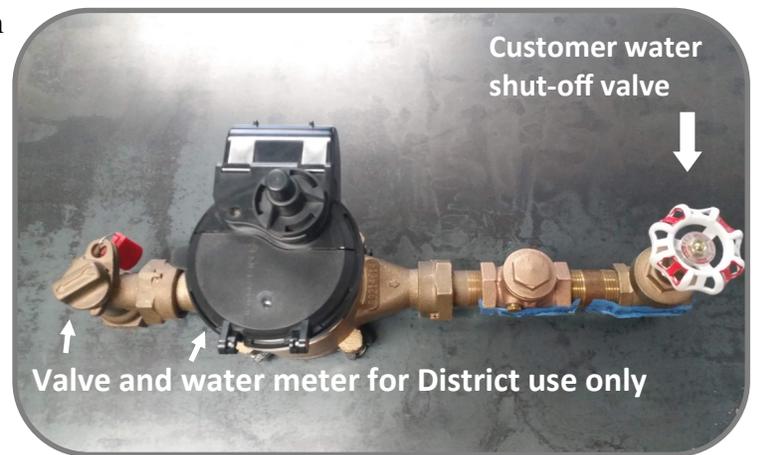
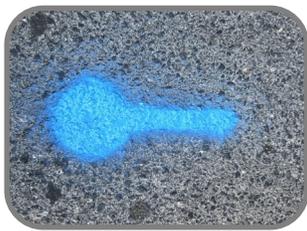
STEP 1: Locate Your Main Water Shut-off Valve

Don't wait for an emergency; locate your main water shut-off valve now! If a pipe breaks, you can stop excessive water loss and flooding by turning off your main water valve. It is commonly located in your meter box, which is normally near the roadway at your property line, often indicated by a blue mark painted on the street.

If you can't find your shut-off valve, a THCS D operator will help you locate it. Operators are available to visit your home during business hours: Call the Office at (209) 586-3172. In an emergency, operators may also be reached after hours: Call the Emergency Pager at (209) 532-5300, enter 5558 and leave a phone number. After-hours staff can help walk you through the steps by phone; if a visit is required, a fee will apply.

Once you've located your meter box, keep it clear of brush and debris so you can quickly access it in an emergency.

A blue mark in the street points to your water-meter box where you will find your water shut-off valve:



STEP 2: Insulate Exposed Pipes and Faucets

Outside faucets and pipes, as well as pipes in uninsulated areas, are especially vulnerable to freezing weather. Protect them with electric heat tape, pipe foam or fiberglass insulation. All are readily available at hardware stores.

Don't let it happen to you!

A local couple, Doug and Lydia (names have been changed), had recently moved into their home when Doug decided to repair a leaky toilet. Doug was unable to find the home's main water shut-off valve but proceeded with the job by only shutting off water to the toilet.

But as he turned the old plastic supply-line valve, it snapped, sending water shooting out all over the bathroom. Doug yelled for his wife to get help while he tried to slow the water flow by stuffing his finger into the broken line.

Lydia ran to their next-door neighbor's home. The neighbor immediately jogged out to the roadway, found the water meter box hidden beneath brush, and shut off the water. Thankfully there was no major damage.

Learn from this couple's mistake: Find your main water shut-off valve today (and get to know your handy neighbors!).

STEP 3: Winterize Your Vacant House

If your home will be vacant for several days, don't leave water running. Instead, follow these general tips to help protect your home:

- Turn off main water valve;
- Turn off electricity or gas to water heater;
- Open indoor and outdoor faucets to drain pipes (and close them before turning water back on); and
- Leave heat set to at least 45 degrees to help keep pipes in interior walls from freezing.

What if my pipes are already frozen?

Thaw frozen pipes slowly and safely. Customers have used a hair dryer, exhaust from a vacuum cleaner, heat tape or a cage-protected light bulb to safely thaw frozen pipes.

Don't Let Winter Weather Catch You Unprepared: Winterize Today