

17 December 2020

Affinity Water issues advice to households to Get Ready for Winter

Dear Councillor

Winter can be a challenging time with extreme cold weather causing household pipes to freeze or burst.

This causes distress to customers, damage to properties and can increase demand on the water network if problems are widespread.

We are urging households to be prepared this winter and ensure water pipes in lofts and gardens are properly insulated so they don't freeze, which can lead to leaks, bursts and damage when they thaw. Homes left empty for more than a day or two without heating on are more at risk from possible freezing and bursts.

We are also reminding customers that if someone they know needs help during a water supply incident, e.g. those with a medical condition, such as home dialysis then they can sign up to our Priority Services Register at www.affinitywater.co.uk/priority-services or they can call 0345 357 2406. We are also continuing to support those affected financially by coronavirus.

How can you help

We have put a short communications guide together to help you share advice and get the people you represent ready for any sudden cold snap this winter.

- **Social Media** – Share our social media messages using the templates below for your convenience and image (attached)
- **Video** – share our preparing for winter video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRHPuyBuV50>
- **Website** – share our webpage www.affinitywater.co.uk/coldweather to keep up to date with the latest winter advice and helpful video tutorials. If you have your own website, please consider uploading the following tips to ensure the people you represent are prepared for winter.

Preparing for winter tips

- Insulate exposed water pipes in your loft and outside. You can use felt, pipe wrap or other insulating material and cover any outside pipe or fitting with a waterproof material. These are available at most DIY stores.
- If you have a cold water tank, make sure it is insulated.
- If you have an outside tap, insulate it too.
- Check that your external and internal stop taps are working so you will be able to turn off your water supply in an emergency.
- If it's very cold outside leave central heating on a low setting overnight.
- If you are planning on leaving your home or business unattended for a long period, turn off the water supply at your stop tap.
- Consider leaving the heating on a low setting.
- Fix dripping taps – even a small trickle can lead to a frozen pipe.

Dealing with frozen pipes

If pipes do freeze, use the stop tap to turn off the water supply. Slowly thaw the pipe with a hairdryer or a towel soaked in hot water or a hot water bottle. Start thawing at the end nearest the tap. Never use a naked flame or blowtorch to thaw the pipe.

Dealing with burst pipes

Turn off your stop taps and make sure your central heating boiler or immersion heater is turned off. Leave an internal tap on to allow thawed water to escape and contact an approved plumber.

To find an approved plumber please visit: www.watersafe.org.uk