Advice for tenants about frozen and burst pipes

Overnight we started to receive several calls from tenants experiencing burst pipes.

Although the temperatures have been very cold it is when the temperatures begin to rise again that the pipes thaw out and can burst.

This can bring all sorts of problems to our houses with many tenants finding they have water gushing into their homes. This is a particular problem where a house is empty and no heating has been on.

Questions and answers –

Why are the pipes beginning to burst now and what kind of problems might I experience?

The pipes are beginning to burst as a result of the temperatures rising.

This can lead to a lot of damage within properties with water bursting from the pipes.

What should I do if I find I have burst pipes?

If you find your pipes have burst you should turn off your water at the stop valve STRAIGHT AWAY.

The stop valve is normally located under the kitchen sink and should be turned clockwise – you should check where it is now rather than wait until there are problems.

Then you should call our Customer Service Centre straight away on 0800 011 3447.

We have staff on hand to offer advice and we will arrange for someone to go out to your property.

You should also switch off their electricity supply at the mains if there is any chance of water getting into electrical fittings.
If you live in a flat you may have a shared water supply and it is very important that you know where the stop valve for this is located. Again, check now and don’t wait until there is a problem.

Although the temperatures are starting to improve, it is likely to get colder again in the coming weeks… Are there any steps I can take to prevent the pipes freezing in the first place?

To avoid pipes freezing in the first place you should try where possible to keep your heating on permanently – even at a low temperature.

Areas such as kitchens and bathrooms should also be kept warmer where possible and you should try and increase the temperature in rooms by closing doors.

If the temperatures plummet again and people find their pipes do freeze, what action should I take?

You need to try and defrost the pipes and there are steps you can take to do this.

A hairdryer or heater could be used to gently heat any frozen sections or even a heated cloth but they should NEVER turn on their boiler or apply a direct flame.

You should also try and increase the heat locally in that area.

If as a result of the defrosting you experience burst pipes, you should turn the water off straight away and contact us on 0800 011 3447.

You should open all COLD taps to drain the system but NEVER turn on the hot taps – your hot water cylinder may collapse if the pipes leading to it are frozen.

Finally, is there anything else that I should look out for?
Empty properties are at risk of freezing and burst pipes and we would urge anyone who knows of such a property to contact us straight away.

This will limit damage to not only the empty property but neighbouring houses.

If you suspect a property near you is empty, please call our Customer Service Centre on 0800 011 3447 and we will look into this.
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