

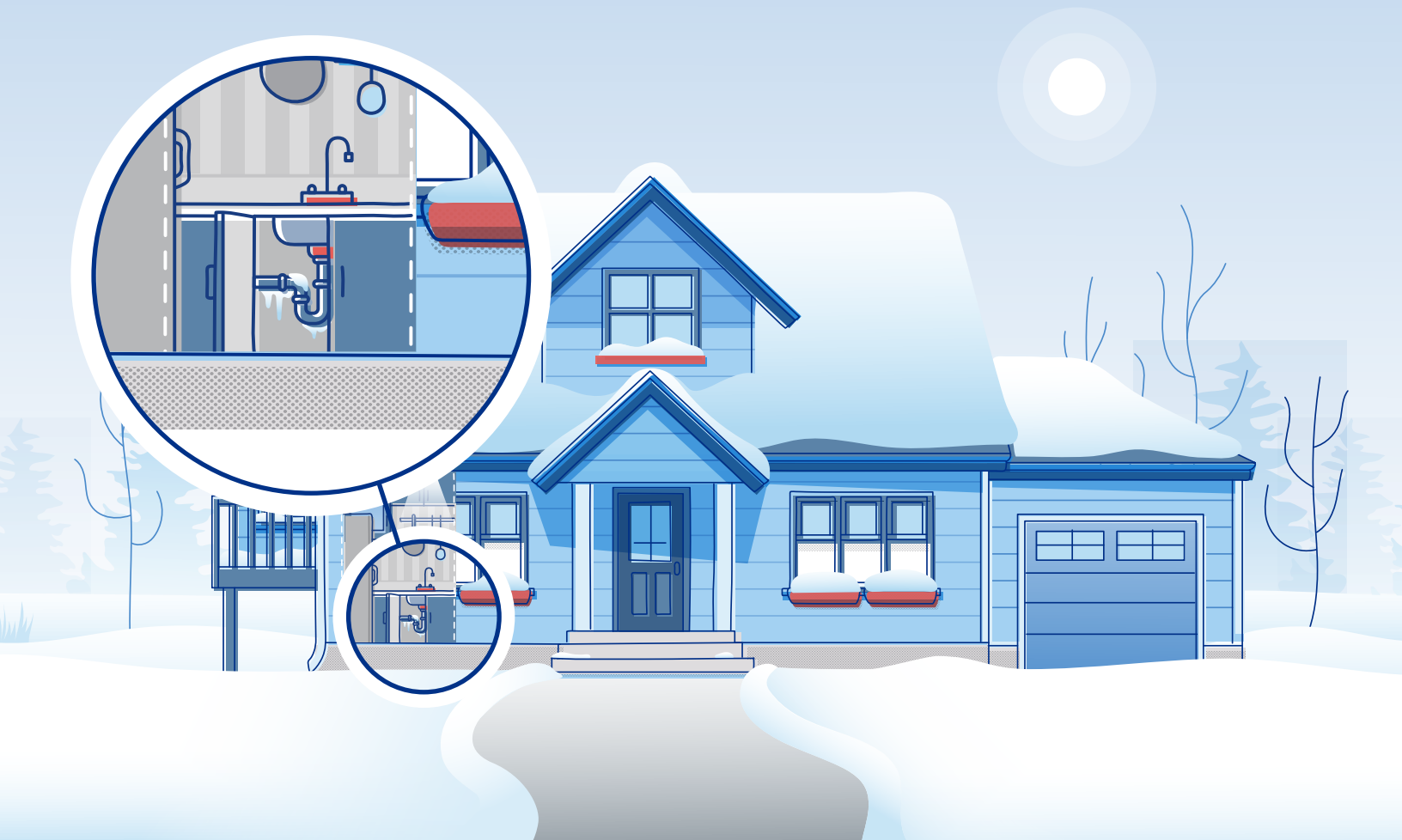


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Protecting Your Home Against Snow & Ice:

Frozen Pipes



Winter in Canada brings its share of challenges for homeowners. One of the most common winter concerns is frozen pipes, but with the right precautions, homeowners can stop sub-zero temperatures from getting the better of their plumbing.

When water in a pipe freezes, it can cause a blockage and increase pressure, potentially leading to a burst pipe and water damage. The good news is that a few proactive steps, can help prevent frozen pipes and protect a home against winter's chill.

Prepare your Plumbing for Cold Temperatures

Before a deep freeze sets in, pipes can be safeguarded by following these simple steps, suggested by the [Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction \(ICLR\)](#):

1. Insulate exposed pipes

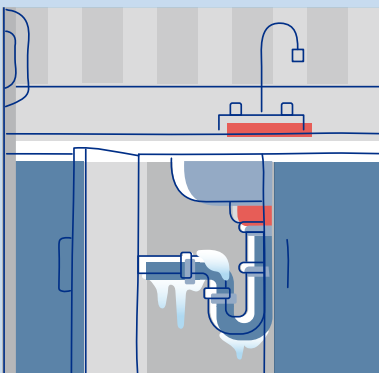
Insulation acts as a protective barrier, helping to keep pipes warm, even in unheated areas. For extra protection on exposed pipes, consider using heating tape or heat cables.

2. Identify cold drafts and seal leaks

Check for drafts in areas where water pipes and supply lines are located, such as basements, crawl spaces, attics, garages, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Sealing gaps around windows, doors, vents, and other openings will help keep cold air out reducing the risk of frozen pipes.

3. Disconnect and drain outdoor water lines

Shut off indoor valves that control outdoor faucets, garden hoses, pools, and decorative water features. Any water left in exterior hoses or pipes can freeze and expand when temperatures drop, increasing pressure inside connected pipes and potentially causing them to crack or burst.



Extra Protection for Extreme Cold Snaps

During particularly frigid weather, additional precautions can make all the difference for preventing frozen pipes. Consider doing the following:

- **Keep water flowings:** Letting a trickle of cold water drip from faucets served by exposed pipes can help prevent freezing, as moving water is less likely to solidify.
- **Maintain a consistent indoor temperature:** Ensuring warm air is distributed evenly throughout the home, particularly in unheated areas such as basements, crawl spaces, and attics can help prevent pipes from freezing.
- **Open interior doors and cabinets:** Allowing warm air to circulate freely around pipes, particularly under sinks, helps prevent freezing.
- **Keep the garage doors closed:** If there are water supply lines in or near a garage attached to the house, keeping doors leading into the garage shut will help to retain heat.
- **Secure a backup power supply:** Ice and snowstorms can sometimes lead to power outages, which can leave pipes vulnerable to freezing. A standby generator can help keep your home heated and your plumbing protected.

Snowbirds that escape the Canadian winter for warmer destinations can take precautions to help prevent frozen pipes in their absence.

The ICLR suggests leaving the thermostat running at no lower than 12°C (54°F), as well as draining the water system before leaving to eliminate the risk of pipes freezing, bursting, and causing a flood when no one is at home. It is also recommended to ask a neighbour or family member to check on your home regularly to ensure everything is in order.

By understanding how to prevent frozen pipes, homeowners can protect their homes from winter-related plumbing issues and avoid the inconvenience of home repairs. **Taking proactive steps now** can ensure your home stays warm, safe, and damage-free throughout the colder months.

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