

**When the weather becomes very cold, the water pipes in your home can freeze. This can lead to a burst pipe in the thaw, which can cause a lot of damage to your home and belongings.**

**Remember, it is your responsibility to insure your home contents.**

### **Tips to prevent frost damage**

- Leave the heating system on for short periods of time throughout the day/night.
- Let warm air into your roof-space by keeping the attic trap door partially open.
- Keep the cupboard door under the sink open.
- Keep room doors slightly open to allow the warm air to move around the house.
- **Do not run your taps** – doing this results in water shortages for everyone
- **If your property is to be left unoccupied for a period of time, make sure that the stopcock in the kitchen is turned off and that the domestic water system is drained down before leaving the house.**

### **What to do if your pipes freeze**

1. **Frozen Service Pipe** i.e. no water in cold tap in the kitchen
  - Use water from attic tank as sparingly as possible until normal service returns
  - If you have a back boiler in your fire/range (i.e. if your fire/range heats water or radiators) only light a small fire while the water is off, provided that there is water in the small storage tank.
2. **Frozen Internal Water Pipe** i.e. water in cold tap in kitchen but no water in other tap or cistern in house

- Turn the water supply off at the stopcock
- Thaw along the pipe, starting from the end nearest the tap.
- Put hot water bottles or a thick cloth soaked in hot water over the frozen pipe, or use an electric hairdryer at its lowest setting to thaw pipes. Be careful not to warm them too quickly or they may burst. **Do not use a blow lamp or any naked flame.**
- Check attic and ceilings for signs of leak - If leak detected drain attic tank by running bath taps
- If you have a back boiler in your fire/range (i.e. if your fire/range heats water or radiators) only light a small fire while the water is off, provided that there is water in the small storage tank.

### **What to do if a pipe bursts**

- Turn off the stopcock by turning it clockwise.
- Try and block the escaping water with towels or other thick cloths.
- Turn off your central heating, immersion heater and any other water heating systems. If the central heating uses solid fuel, let this die out.
- Once you have shut down your water heating, turn on all your taps to drain the system. Flushing your toilet several times will also help.
- If water leaks near anything electrical, switch off the mains electricity immediately. If the mains switch is wet, do not touch it as it may be dangerous!
- If water has been leaking through for some time and the ceilings are bulging, rooms may not be safe to enter. If you notice the leak quickly you can catch dripping water in buckets. If the ceiling has just started to bulge, you could punch a small hole in it with a screwdriver to release the water.

- Call us on **071 9620005**
- Don't forget to turn off your taps once the problem is fixed!

### **How do I find my stopcock?**

The stopcock is a valve for turning off and on the cold water system in your home. Turn the stopcock in a clockwise direction to shut the water supply off. You can turn the water supply back on by turning the stopcock in an anti-clockwise direction.

Stopcocks are usually found in your kitchen, below the sink unit. However, in some houses the stopcock is found in the hotpress. It is important that you know where the stopcock is and that you check that your stopcock is working.

### **How do I check my stopcock?**

Run the cold water tap in your kitchen and turn the stopcock in a clockwise direction to check if the cold water turns off. If you find it difficult to turn or it isn't working, call us on **071 9620005**.

If you cannot find the stopcock, you can call us and we will try and assist you in locating it.

### **External stopcock**

This is usually located adjacent to the property boundary, generally on the footpath or verge. You should ensure that you are familiar with its location and how to turn it off and that it is easily accessible.

**Before any problem arises ensure that you can turn both stop cocks on and off (i.e. make sure they are not stuck or seized) – don't wait until you have a problem with your water supply to do this.**

## Heating Systems Generally

If your water supply is cut off at the mains it will affect your heating system (unless you have an electrical heating system). Most heating systems can continue to be used, as once the systems are filled with water they only need to be replenished very occasionally. Particular care is needed when dealing with solid fuel or back boiler type systems.

Check what type of system you have and follow the advice below:

### Any heating system with a cold water storage tank and hot water cylinder (i.e. oil or solid fuel)

If the water supply is cut off but your cold water storage tank is full, it is still safe to run your central heating but use your domestic water sparingly, as you risk running the storage tank dry and creating an airlock.

### Oil fired systems

Don't run out of oil. Dip your tank now. If you have less than 300mm (one foot) of oil left in the bottom, order oil immediately. Remember there may be big demands on suppliers at times of extreme weather and delivery delays can result.

If you do run out of oil, your oil line may become air locked and need to be bled. **You will be responsible for arranging this.**

In severe frost ensure that your oil fired boiler is on regularly throughout the day/night to prevent frost damage to the boiler or the heating pipes.

## Solid fuel central heating system

If you have a back boiler in your fire/range (i.e. if your fire/range heats water or radiators in your home) only light a small fire while the water is off.

### Important general information re water shortages in freezing conditions

- Conserve water as much as possible
- Don't use your washing machine or your dishwasher
- We strongly recommend that you don't use your immersion heater because you can burn it out if it's not completely covered by water

**Remember – be particularly vigilant for leaks when a thaw sets in**

**If in doubt contact us – 071-9620005**

**In a prolonged severe weather event out-of-hours contact numbers will be available – You will be directed to the relevant number by dialling 071-9620005. Details will also be publicised on local radio.**

**Be a good neighbour** - Check on elderly or unwell neighbours who might need assistance during cold weather

# Prepare your home for cold weather



## Information for Our Tenants

**Comhairle Contae Liatroma**

**Leitrim County Council**

Website: [www.leitrimcoco.ie](http://www.leitrimcoco.ie)

Email: [customerservice@leitrimcoco.ie](mailto:customerservice@leitrimcoco.ie)

Ph: 071- 9620005

