

Cold Weather Tips

In case of a frozen or burst pipe, know where your water shutoff valve is located. (A shut-off valve is located on the District side of your meter, but you should install a valve at a point where the pipe enters the house, for your own use and convenience.)

Be extremely careful when thawing frozen pipes. Use a hair dryer or heat tape wrapped around the pipes, rather than an open flame, which can cause a fire.

Close foundation vents with insulation material.

Shut off and drain outside domestic water faucets and protect them with insulated covers.

If the temperature dips below freezing for more than a day, you may want to leave a cold water faucet (at the point in your system furthest from the meter) running a

tiny stream overnight. (Excess use will not qualify for leak relief.) Open cabinet doors under sinks to allow room temperature to reach the pipes.

When winterizing your car, do not connect a domestic water hose to your car radiator or heater hose without an approved backflow prevention device on the faucet or piping. If you are flushing the radiator with domestic water when a sudden loss of pressure occurs, antifreeze can be siphoned into the water mains.

Incorrect disposal of antifreeze can leak into the groundwater supply. Used antifreeze should be collected and recycled in marked containers.

Do not allow antifreeze to accumulate where dogs or cats can drink it.

** WHERE'S THE MASTER VALVE **

Do you know where the master water supply (shut-off) valve is in your home?

Does everyone else in the household know where it is?

If there's an emergency, you'll need to know in a hurry. You can't afford to waste precious minutes searching while the basement floods or the carpets are drenched.

These are the most likely locations:

- Where the water supply pipe enters your home
- Near your clothes washer hook-up
- Near your water heater

Every home, apartment and business has a master water supply valve. But be sure to find the right one. Don't make a mistake! ... Try turning it off briefly to see if all the water faucets in the building are shut off. If they aren't, try again. Once you've found the right valve, mark it with a tag, a bright ribbon or colorful paint. Make it easy to see. If the worst happens and we hope it doesn't you'll have to find it quickly. (AWWA)

Crystal Springs routinely installs a gate valve in *front* of every meter. This valve is for the benefit of the District in maintaining and repairing the meter apparatus. Customers are encouraged to install their own shut-off valves (for use in emergencies or general maintenance) on the house-side of the meter.

5 Ingredients for Less-Toxic Cleaning

With five ingredients — baking soda, washing soda, liquid soap or detergent, distilled vinegar and an antiseptic essential oil — you can clean everything in your house.

Baking Soda and Washing Soda. The magic of these minerals is that they neutralize many stains and odors. They are alkaline, cut grease and can even dissolve wax. Baking soda also serves as a mild abrasive. Washing soda is the best heavy-duty scourer, but it is slightly caustic, so you need to wear gloves when using it.

Liquid Soap or Detergent. Soap is better for your health and the environment than detergents, but because water reacts with minerals in soap, washing clothes with it can leave an insoluble film and turn clothes grayish. If you wash your clothes with detergent, select the most biodegradable brand.

Vinegar and Essential Oils. Vinegar neutralizes many stains and odors, dissolves scale and pulls dirt out of wood. Use only white distilled vinegar for cleaning; apple cider vinegar could stain some materials, such as upholstery. Antiseptic essential oils — such as tea tree, sweet orange, lemon-grass, rose, clove, eucalyptus, cinnamon, birch or lavender — kill bacteria and mold.

Soap for Sparkling Dishes This cleaner works well except in hard water, where it can cause soap scum.

1 ounce liquid castile soap

2 cups water

1 teaspoon vegetable glycerin

5 to 10 drops lavender essential oil (optional, but lavender is antibacterial)

Combine the soap and water in a jar. Add the glycerin and lavender (if using). Stir to blend. Pour some on a sponge, or add a few teaspoons to a sink full of warm water.

Soap Scum-fighting Spray

1 teaspoon borax

1/2 teaspoon liquid detergent

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar

2 cups hot water

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle, and shake to blend. Spray. Follow with a sponge. Rinse. Makes 2 1/4 cups.

Gentle-but-effective Scrub—use on Formica countertops, sinks, the bathtub and the shower stall.

1/2 cup baking soda

Enough liquid soap or detergent to make a frosting-like consistency

5 to 10 drops essential oils, such as rose or lavender (optional)

Place the baking soda in a bowl; slowly pour in the liquid soap, stirring all the while, until the cleaner has a frosting-like consistency. If you're using any essential oils, be sure to add them last. Scoop the creamy mixture onto a sponge, wash the surface well and rinse. Makes 1/2 cup.

Floor Shine - use on all floors except when directed by the manufacturer to avoid even mild detergents.

1/4 cup liquid soap or detergent

Up to 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar or lemon juice

2 gallons warm water

Combine the ingredients in a large plastic bucket. Use with a mop or sponge. Makes about 2 gallons.

Club Soda Linoleum Spray - alkaline minerals in club soda work wonders against dirt.

2 cups club soda

Pour the club soda into a spray bottle, spray onto linoleum and mop dry. Makes 2 cups.

Toilet Bowl Tidy-up

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar

2 cups water

Vinegar is an underused but effective disinfectant. Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle, shake and spray along the inside rim of the toilet. Leave on for 15 minutes and then scrub with a toilet brush. Makes 2 1/4 cups.

<http://www.motherearthnews.com/Modern-Homesteading/2004-04-01/Green-Cleaners.aspx?page=3>