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A public information organization of insurance companies

****NEWS RELEASE****

FOR RELEASE: AT WILL

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AVOID FROZEN WATER PIPES

Just as we take personal safeguards when winter weather approaches, precautions also need to be taken in order to avoid frozen water pipes, an insurance industry spokesman said today.

"Missourians should be reminded that frozen pipe breakage causes significant damage each year for homeowners", according to Brent Butler, government affairs director of the Missouri Insurance Information Service.

As water freezes, it expands. The resulting ice that forms in your home's water pipes can cause pressure to build up shattering pipe seals or the pipes themselves, sending water pouring through your house.

"You can avoid costly damage to your walls, ceilings, carpets and furniture by following a few simple precautions", Butler stated.

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The insurance industry offers the following tips to help protect water pipes from the cold:

- * Detach water hoses and store them indoors prior to the first freeze.
- * Use faucet covers or wrap rags, paper, trash bags or plastic foam around outdoor faucets and pipes for insulation.
- * Seal cracks and holes in outside walls and foundations near water pipes with caulking.
- * When extremely cold weather is forecast, open kitchen and bathroom cabinets that border outside walls to expose water pipes to warmer indoor air.
- * Keep a slow trickle of water flowing through faucets connected to pipes that run through an unheated space. Alternatively, consider turning off the shut-off valve while these faucets are running in order to drain the pipes and help avoid freezing.
- * If you leave town for more than a few days in winter, don't turn down the indoor thermostat too low.
- * In the event your pipes freeze, turn off your water at the shut-off valve.
- * Don't leave electrical appliances near frozen pipes.
- * Don't use high-risk techniques in an attempt to thaw frozen pipes. This can result in more substantial damage. If you try to thaw your own pipes, be careful. Think twice, you may need to call a professional plumber for assistance.

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