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Dee Valley Water gives advice to customers with frozen pipes in their home as the 'Beast from the East' hits hard

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The 'Beast from the East' has well and truly landed now and Dee Valley Water is reporting a huge increase in customers calling about frozen pipes. The company has some great tips and advice for what to do if the pipes in your home or business are frozen.

Jodie Bowen, Customer Contact Lead, explains: "Since the freezing weather hit we've seen a huge increase in the number of calls we've had from customers about frozen pipes. Usually when people find that the water is off in their home, they quite rightly give us a call, however most of these calls today have turned out to be the customer's pipework being frozen. As we're not responsible for the pipework inside homes, we can only issue advice on what to do, but we've got plenty of it."

Dee Valley was ready for the cold season, bringing in extra resources so that it could cope with any increase in work. It has also made sure it has the right vehicles, such as 4x4's, so that work to repair leaks and bursts can continue even in this terrible weather.

And the company is advising homeowners to take action now, as the cold could lead to pipes inside the home being damaged, causing flooding and sometimes costly damage. It's important for customers to understand how they can look after their own pipework, as Jodie explains:

"There's still time to get your home ready for the cold and it's such an easy and inexpensive job. Many of our customers may not realise that Dee Valley is only responsible for the water mains and service pipes in the public highway. Anything inside the property boundary is the responsibility of the homeowner. We want our customers to avoid what could be a lot of heartache and expense if their home is affected by burst pipes.

"Colder weather can wreak havoc on household water pipes. When water freezes within a pipe it expands, putting more pressure on the pipes and joints, often causing pipes to split or joints to pull apart.

"Taking steps now to make sure the pipework leading to your home and within your property is protected can help avoid problems with frozen pipes when the temperatures drop. I have a few top tips to help our customers make sure they're well prepared for the cold weather ahead."

Jodie's top tips for protecting your household pipes against the frost:

- Wrap all pipework, fittings and storage tanks in unheated areas of your home (such as lofts, roofs, outbuildings and garages) with insulation. It's very important that there are no gaps in the insulation, even where the pipes bend, to make sure the cold is kept out.
- It's best to use good quality waterproof foam lagging which can be found at your local DIY store.
- If you have outside taps, either insulate them or drain them down to the pipework that links to the tap.
- Don't worry too much about the underground water pipes which lead to your home. These should be buried deep enough to protect them from the frost.
- If you're concerned about your own DIY abilities, a registered plumber can check your household pipes to make sure they're properly lagged and fill in any gaps. We support WaterSafe who have a list of approved plumbers at WaterSafe.org.uk.
- As temperatures drop, it's worth making sure your heating comes on at regular intervals, even if you're out, to maintain some warmth around your property.
- If you'll be away from home for a few days it's best to turn off your water at the stop tap so that if a pipe does freeze or burst while you're away any damage will be limited.
- Make sure that you and other members of your household know where your stop tap is located so that it can be reached quickly in an emergency, and most importantly, check that it's working properly. Stop taps are usually located under the kitchen sink, in the garage or in a ground floor utility room or bathroom, near to where the water supply pipe first enters your home. A stop tap isn't used very often and finding that it's stuck or broken when you've had a burst will only complicate the problem.
- If you do have a problem with your water supply this winter, with either low pressure or no water coming out of your taps, first check to see if your neighbours are having similar trouble. This will help establish if the issue is on Dee Valley's network or on your own supply pipe. If your neighbours' water supply is normal it is likely that you will need to call a plumber. If more than one household is affected you'll need to ring us on 01978 833200.



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4 March 2018

Dee Valley Water calls for help as the thaw starts to cause huge increase in leaks

Now that the 'Beast from the East' and Storm Emma have passed, Dee Valley Water is working round the clock to deal with the aftermath as pipes that were frozen are thawing and leaking.

Steve Witter, Head of Leakage Operations for the company, explains: "With a huge increase in the number of leaks and bursts due to the recent freezing weather, we're asking our customers to report any leaks as soon as possible so we can fix them fast.

"When water freezes within a pipe it expands, putting more pressure on the pipes and joints, often causing pipes to split or joints to pull apart, and then when it thaws the water will start to leak out. Obviously we don't want to waste water by having it leak out of the pipes, but it's also important to stop leaks from freezing and becoming dangerous ice patches in the cold weather.

"We have a huge network of water pipes and it's tricky to keep an eye on all of it at the same time. We have a lot of specialist technology that will help us to find leaks quickly, but often our customers can spot water leaks before we can."

Teams of engineers have been working day and night throughout the freezing cold and snowy weather to repair leaks and keep water supplies on for customers, but there are now huge amounts of leaks and bursts left as a result of the thawing temperatures.

Steve continues: "We know that there's still a lot more work to do and there may be some leaks that are out there that we don't know about. So we need our customers help. If you spot a leak while you're out and about, call our 'Leakline' number on 01978 833200, the call is free on most landlines. Or report the leak on-line through our website at deevalleywater.co.uk. Although if you are visiting our website it's worth having a look at our 'check my water supply' section which lists leaks that have already been reported to us.

"In many cases, we don't know where leaks are until our customers report them. Please don't assume we already know about the burst or leak, even if it's a large one: particularly in rural areas where it is possible for leaks to run for days without being noticed. We're always grateful for your help.

“If you have a leak within your home or business however, maybe on pipes in cellars or lofts that weren’t lagged and got cold, you will need to call a plumber as you are responsible for those pipes. We support WaterSafe and you can find a list of approved plumbers at watersafe.org.uk.”

The company emphasised that each leak or burst is repaired on a priority basis, with those affecting its customers’ water supply being fixed first. Steve said: “Providing our customers with a continuous supply of water is a priority for us so we will always fix these first and then focus on other leaks. So please give a good description of the leak when you report it so that we can get to the most urgent ones first.”

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