



sovereign

## Cold weather tips

Snow and cold weather can bring lots of problems, so use these tips to prepare your home for winter.

### 1. Gritting: make sure you don't slip up

If you live in one of our supported housing schemes for disabled or older people we will grit your communal areas in icy conditions. Contact us in the usual way if there's an area you think should be gritted, and our contractors will come out and do it for you. We're not responsible for public footpaths and roads though, so you'll need to contact your local authority to ask about gritting in these areas.

### 2. Keep warm in your home

- Use draught excluders under doors, and keep doors closed whenever possible.
- Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows, and check for draughts around windows and doors.
- Draught-proof your letter box, cat flap or keyholes.
- Wear an extra layer of clothing.
- Set the programmer on your central heating and hot water system so it comes on when you need it. See our 'heating your home' fact sheet for more advice about using your system.

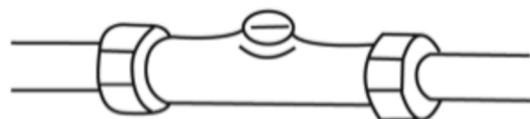
### 3. Avoid frozen pipes

- In very cold weather, try to keep some heating on at all times.
- If you have a loft hatch, open it to allow some warmth to circulate into the loft.
- Look in your loft to check if pipes and tanks are lagged (covered). If they aren't, please tell us.
- If you go on holiday or leave your home for a long period during the winter, make sure the heating is on for some of each day, even if it's only for half an hour.

### 4. What to do if your pipes freeze

- First turn off the stopcock.
- Put a heater close to the pipe (a hairdryer is ideal).
- If you can't thaw out the pipe, keep the stopcock turned off unless you need water – this will stop you being flooded if the pipes thaw suddenly and burst.
- If you keep your stopcock turned off, you must turn it on every few hours to allow the tank to fill up.
- If the hot-water tank is not filling up, or no hot water is coming through the hot taps, you must not use your water heater, back boiler, immersion heater or central-heating boiler as it's dangerous to use these without water.
- Be prepared for the pipe to thaw – have a bucket or bowl ready to collect any water if the pipe has burst.
- It can take a long time for pipes to thaw out. You can use isolation valves (see below) to shut off the water supply to individual outlets – for example the cistern, taps, bath or basin – while keeping a supply to the rest of your home.

supply on



supply off

