

Winter Water Wisdom

Hillview Water Company is receiving a huge number of weather related calls. Freezing temperatures are causing water problems throughout the Oakhurst community.

Here are a few suggestions to anticipate and deal with cold water issues:

Water Shut Off – It's important for you to know where your water shut off is located. When a water mishap occurs, the first thing you'll want to do is turn off the water. Make sure your shut off valve is clearly marked and easily accessible and that you, and your entire household, knows its location. (Do not use the shut off on the Hillview side of the meter or tamper with it in any way.)

Going on vacation? We suggest you drain your pipes. We know of too many people who have returned home from a wonderful time away only to discover their pipes have burst while they were gone. Shutting off the water to your residence and draining the water (by turning on the lowest faucet in your home) can mean the difference between a happy homecoming and coming home to a disaster. (An alternative measure would be to leave a faucet dripping slowly to move the water in the pipes.)

Keep our phone number (683.4322) handy so you can call us at the first sign of water trouble.

Cold Water Preparation

At any time, unpredictable weather can sneak up on you and wreak havoc on unprepared water pipes. Icy winds and dipping temperatures can do a lot of damage to your home by freezing pipes and leaving you without flowing water. There are many precautions you can take to help minimize impacts.

Before Freezing Weather

- Disconnect and drain hoses from outside faucets.
- Turn off and drain irrigation systems and backflow devices.
- Wrap backflow assemblies with insulating material.
- Cover outside faucets.
- Insulate hot and cold pipes in unheated areas such as the garage, crawl space, or attic.
- Show household members how to turn off water to the house in case of emergencies.
- Cover foundation vents.
- If your home will be unoccupied for an extended period of time, you may want to seek additional information about winterizing your home.

During Freezing Weather

- Open cupboards under sinks, especially where plumbing is in outside walls, to let interior heat warm the pipes.
- Temporarily, keep a steady drip of cold water at an inside faucet farthest from the meter. This keeps water moving, making it less likely to freeze.
- If you are away for any length of time, shutting off the water can reduce the chances of broken pipes. Leave your heat on in your house to at least 55 degrees. Shut off the water to the house and open faucets to drain pipes; flush the toilet once to drain the tank, but not the bowl. Call Hillview at 683.4322 if you need to turn off the water at the meter.
- Be a good neighbor. If a neighbor is away or you are next to a vacant house, notify Hillview at 683.4322 if you see a suspected leak.
- Check on the elderly and make sure they are okay.

If your Pipes Freeze

- Try and determine which pipe(s) are frozen. If some faucets work but others don't, that might mean that pipes inside your home are frozen.
- If a pipe is frozen, assume it may be broken and will leak when thawed. Be prepared by having leak repair supplies on hand. Be ready to shut off your water before your line thaws.
- If there is not water at all to your home, the problem may be at the street. Call us at 683.4322.
- Never thaw a frozen pipe with an open flame. You may start a fire or your pipe may burst. Use hot air from a hair dryer or the exhaust from a vacuum cleaner to unfreeze a pipe.
- If your pipes are frozen, contact Hillview so we can ensure that water is flowing from your meter correctly. However, our crews are not able to help fix frozen pipes between the water meter and the house or inside the house.

If A Pipe Breaks

- Determine if it's a hot or cold water pipe.
 - If it's a hot water pipe: Turn off the water to your water heater. Cold water should still be available to the toilet and the rest of your house.
 - If it's a cold water pipe: Turn off the main water shutoff valve. Water will not be available to the rest of your house.
- If needed, call a plumber to assist you with repairs and get your water in working order

Shutting Off Your Water

- Look for your shut off valve in the following places:
 - Outside near the foundation, often protected by a concrete ring or clay pipe.
 - In the crawl space or basement, where the water line enters the home.

- In the garage where the water line enters the wall or ceiling, near the water heater or laundry hookup.
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Your Water Meter

Your water meter is often located in a concrete or plastic box in the ground, generally in front of your house and near the side property line. It's important to keep the box free of plants and roots that can obstruct or hide the meter or damage the service line.

Can't Find Your Shut Off Valve?

You may want to have a shut off valve installed if you can't locate one. If you have an emergency and need help shutting off your water at the meter or locating your water meter, please call Hillview at 683.4322.

Preparing For Emergencies

During times of emergency, water service, like any utility, may be unavailable for a period of time. Hillview's primary focus will be the restoration of the system and the return of service to your home or business. You may need to get by for several days on your own, until help arrives, or the system is restored. A person can survive a couple of weeks without food, but only a few days without water. If you keep commercially bottled water as an emergency supply, be aware of the expiration date and rotate accordingly. If you choose to bottle your own, we recommend that you use a food grade container designed for water storage and change the water at least every six months.