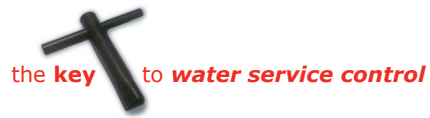


## repairing a burst pipe

You can make a **temporary** repair to a burst pipe by binding it tightly with a cloth or tape. A jubilee clip is also useful in an emergency. However, any temporary repair needs to be replaced as soon as possible by a permanent repair, carried out by a suitably qualified plumber. Proper health & safety measures should be carried out for all repair works.

To find a qualified plumber in your area use your golden pages business directory or contact directory enquiries.



Various types of meter box covers and their access keys.  
A limited stock available from your local area office/hardware store.

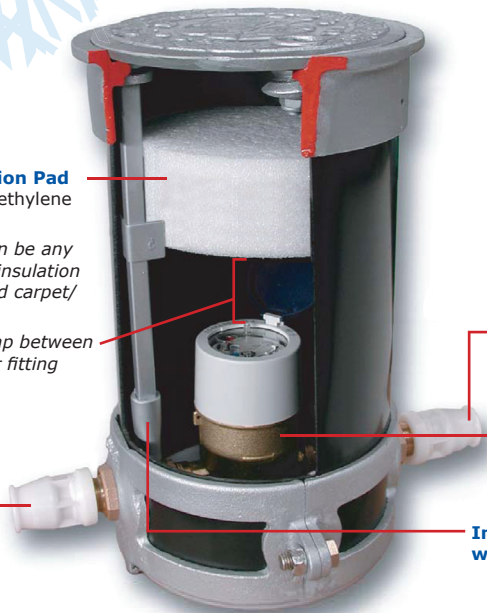
### Frost Protection Pad

Expanded Polyethylene Foam

A frost plug can be any other suitable insulation material i.e. old carpet/fabric

**Note:** leave gap between plug and water fitting

Council Side



Customer Side

Standard Water Meter Insulation

Integrated Water Stopcock within meter box

### Spacer pipe

Meter not fitted yet

**Note:** lack of water within meter box chamber.

Any water within this chamber to be removed.



Be prepared -  
wrap up this winter  
insulate and protect your home



This leaflet has been prepared by Westmeath County Council to inform householders of appropriate measures to undertake in the home in order to conserve water and provide adequate supply in times of extreme weather events.

**WESTMEATH**  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE NA h-IARMHÍ



For more information on Westmeath Water Services call our Customer Helpline on **044 93 32000** or visit our website at **www.westmeathcoco.ie**

Householders - Know your water and heating systems

## protect your home - beat the cold

- **heat:** warmth offers the best protection against frozen pipes, so leave your heating on, using a low setting in your home. Alternatively, if you're going away for a long time, turn off your water supply and drain the system - a qualified plumber should be able to give you advice about this. If your neighbours don't have a key for your home make sure they have contact details in case of an emergency.
- **insulate:** your water tank should be fitted with an insulation jacket or alternatively, the top and sides of the tank can be wrapped with suitable insulation material. Don't place loft insulation under the tank as this stops heat from the rooms below helping to keep the tank warm. If you have toilet cisterns, water tanks or pipes in exposed places or unheated outbuildings, make sure you insulate them. Suitable insulation material in various pipe diameters is available from your local hardware store and can be fitted within minutes.
- **keep a small emergency pack handy** in case of loss of power or other services - include items such as a torch, radio (with batteries), candles and matches. Keep it in an easily accessible place where you can find it when you need it, even in the dark.
- **keep a note of the telephone numbers** of your local plumber, electrician, council and insurer for emergency use (you may want to keep a copy in your emergency pack).
- **be a good neighbour:** when cold weather hits, keep an eye out for your neighbours, especially the frail and elderly or disabled.

## reduce risk of frozen pipes

- 1 Ensure frost plug or suitable insulating material is placed inside the meter box below the meter lid. The frost plug creates a thermal barrier thus reducing the risk of freezing the services below. Ensure no obstacles protrude above the surface of the footpath causing a trip hazard.
- 2 Ensure no water is allowed to collect at the base of the meter chamber/meter box. This is prone to creating a local ice plug.
- 3 Do **not** run your taps as a anti-freezing measure - it will lead to water shortages.

- 4 Householder should map the location of the service pipe from the stopcock to kitchen sink - contact house builder for this information.
- 5 Regularly check your meter chamber for signs of any leaks on the customer side.
- 6 Householder should know the location of **all** stopcocks and internal valves for both heating and water systems and clearly label them.

## if a pipe freezes...

- 1 Turn off the stop valve immediately and switch off your immersion heater and central heating.
- 2 Open all COLD taps to drain the system, but **NEVER** turn on the hot taps - your hot water cylinder may collapse if the pipes leading to it are frozen.
- 3 Call a qualified plumber if you are in any doubt about what to do.

## thawing out your pipes

Never attempt to thaw out frozen pipes by switching on your immersion heater or central heating boiler. Instead, check for leaking joints or bursts in the pipes. Then gently heat any frozen sections with a hairdryer or a heated cloth wrapped around the pipe. Never apply a direct flame.

## if a pipe bursts...

- 1 Locate the stop valve which controls the water supply entering your home and turn it off immediately. The stop valve is often - but not always - located under your kitchen sink and normally closes by turning clockwise. Then switch off your immersion heater and central heating boiler. Open all hot and cold taps to drain them of any remaining water to minimise the damage.
- 2 Switch off your electricity supply at the mains if there's any chance that water could come into contact with electrical wiring or fittings. If you are in any doubt don't take a risk - call a qualified electrician.
- 3 If you live in a flat, you may have a shared water supply. Make sure you can get to the stop valve; this is normally located where the water supply enters the building. Then check with your neighbours that turning off the water has not affected their supply. It's important to remember to make sure your hot water system is refilled **BEFORE** you re-light your boiler or switch on the immersion heater.

### remember:

Any pipework within your house boundary is your responsibility, and spending a little time on simple frost protection now could help you avoid trouble and expense during cold weather.

