**COLD WEATHER PREPAREDNESS FOR YOUR HOME**

Due to the forecasted frigid temperatures over the next several days, Berea Municipal Utilities would like to share a few cost saving energy reminders and frozen pipe prevention tips. The energy and water provided to our customers is purchased by Berea Municipal Utilities at a wholesale rate and provided to you, our customer, at a retail rate.

Any energy or water conservation measures you can take not only saves you money on your monthly bill, it also enables our utility to keep rates low for our customers.

During extreme winter temperatures the demand on our electrical system takes a toll on our transformers and circuit breakers. Likewise, frigid temperatures can also cause problems in the water distribution system. Usually in the form of frozen or broken water lines which leads to costly repairs for both the utility and the customer.

By following some of these tips, we can all work together to ensure we get through this period of cold weather with minimal impact to our utility and no costly repairs for our customers.

**Energy Saving Tips:**

**Change your air filter.** By replacing the filter, the furnace blower will not work as hard to move air. Also, verify your vents are clear, clean & not blocked.

**Keep thermostat at a set temperature.** Keeping the thermostat at a constant temperature setting will prevent usage spikes. It will also allow you to become comfortable with the programmed setting.

**Open blinds & curtains on clear days.** This will allow the sun to naturally heat your home, which will reduce the usage of the heat furnace.

**Use lights only when necessary.** This will reduce wasteful power. Change to LED bulbs whenever replacing failed bulbs. LED bulbs use roughly half the power as incandescent bulbs.

**Lower the water heater temperature setting.** Lowering the temperature by a few degrees will allow the water heater to run less. Washing clothes in cold water will also save on power usage.

**Check seams around doors & windows.** Replace caulking, seals & weatherproofing around doors & windows to prevent cold air from entering home.

**Install more insulation.** Installing more insulation will always help in keeping your home warm or cool. Crawl spaces & attic spaces are perfect places where warm or cool air can escape from your home. Insulation will help to prevent this air from escaping.

**Unplug appliances when not in use.** TV’s, microwaves, phone charges & other items can still use power even though they are not used. When several of these items are plugged in, the amount of power used will add up.

**Protect Against Frozen Water Lines During Extreme Cold Weather**

* + Disconnect and drain garden hoses.
  + Cover outside faucets with insulating foam covers.
  + Turn off water to outside faucets.
  + Close or cover foundation vents under house and windows to basements.
  + Close garage doors.
  + Insulate exposed pipes (both hot and cold) under house with foam pipe insulation.
  + Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing. Be sure to move any harmful cleaners and household chemicals up out of the reach of children.
  + Drip hot and cold faucets in kitchen and bath. Drip single control faucets with lever set in middle.
  + Don’t forget to check on pipes to your washing machine in the laundry room.
  + Locate water main cut-off valve and have a cut-off key handy.
  + If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.
  + Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
  + Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable space heater (kept away from flammable materials), or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device.
  + Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible, or if you cannot thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.
  + Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too.
  + Use a hairdryer, heat lamp, electric heat tape, or a portable space heater to thaw frozen pipes that have not burst.
  + Keep the faucet open when thawing frozen pipes to allow water to begin flowing through it.
  + After the weather has warmed above freezing and any frozen pipes have thawed, turn off dripping faucets and monitor your water meter to check for unseen leaks.