

## EMERGENCY FREEZE & WATER-LOSS PREVENTION

As we move past the holidays and look ahead to the upcoming week and the New Year, there is a several-day cold snap moving its way across New England.



Figure 1: Worcester, MA Weather, Courtesy of weather.com

With this type of weather comes in increased and inherent risk of water losses due to freezing plumbing. To exacerbate this risk, this particular weather system is moving into the area over a time when many municipal buildings are vacant or have reduced hours of operation. This allows freezing conditions to perpetuate for a longer period of time unnoticed. The majority of freeze losses that occur due to freezing, however, are preventable.

Here are some tips we recommend to avoid these costly, inconvenient, messy situations:

- Ensure that all thermostats are set to "Heat" at temperatures above 50 degrees.
- Open doors between rooms, hallways, closets, bathrooms, etc. to allow heat to move into these spaces. (Typically we recommend leaving doors closed to prevent the spread of a potential fire, but given the short-term risk of this weather, opening doors is prudent.)
- Close all exterior openings such as windows and doors (yes this sounds obvious, but given our experience is worth mentioning)
- Verify that heaters, radiators, and air handling units are all functioning by verifying each unit. This can be done with a thermal imaging camera quite readily or with a very inexpensive (\$20-50) infrared temperature sensor such as this one:



Figure 2: IR Temperature Gun, Photo courtesy Walmart.com

- Open cabinets beneath sinks, especially at exterior walls, to allow heat to enter these areas.
- If you have an area where you know heat is difficult to maintain, rectify the conditions with proper maintenance. Until that can be accomplished, consider (safely) using portable heaters and opening faucets to a slow drip/flow to prevent freezing within the plumbing.
- Ensure fire sprinkler system and alarm systems are regularly inspected, tested, and maintained by qualified contractors

We sincerely wish each of you a happy and safe New Year. Stay warm and dry.