Weather Related Accidents Increase as Pipes Freeze

Local News

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Posted on : December 10, 2009 at 5:51 am

The Aberdeen Fire Department is is reporting an increase in call activity due to the cold temperatures. In addition to problems with heating appliances there could be increased activity due to frozen plumbing. The AFD would like to remind the public of the following cold weather safety precautions:

When pipes freeze we see occurrences every year in which someone will attempt to thaw a frozen section of pipe and simply use a torch to melt the ice. **Never do this!** Pipes freeze when warm air cannot reach them due to additional construction or creation of a confined space. Using a torch becomes hazardous as the open flame can ignite nearby combustibles or wood framing and quickly get out of control.

The key to safely thawing frozen pipes is to apply slow, even heat by using

A Hot Air Blower
A Heat lamp
A Heating cable or tape
An Electric Pipe Thawing Machine
Hot wet towels wrapped around pipes
Portable Heater to heat the space
Call a qualified professional to fix the problem

Additional precautions should be taken when thawing pipes to ensure a fire is prevented: Survey the hot work area and always remove combustible material.
If combustible material can’t be removed, use thermal barriers (i.e. ceramic flame guard or a heat shield) to protect it. Have a multi-purpose fire extinguisher nearby at all times. The extinguisher should have minimum rating of 3A 10BC. Conduct a fire watch for at least 30 minutes after finishing hot work.

Know where your structures water shut of is. As it begins to warm up, frozen pipes will rupture causing water damage.

Cover foundation or crawl space venting during these extremely cold conditions until temperatures warm up. Protect any exposed plumbing to the weather. Allowing faucets to trickle, will keeps the water moving and will help it to not to freeze. Open under sink cabinets to allow warmer air to circulate around the plumbing.