

# How to Prepare Your Plumbing for Winter

## Essential Maintenance Tips

This checklist, based on UK-specific general best practices, covers essential preventative measures homeowners can take to avoid the inconvenience and cost of burst or frozen pipes during UK winters. Following these steps helps maintain heating and plumbing system integrity and ensures winter comfort and safety indoors.

### CHECKLIST

- Turn off outdoor taps and drain residual water
- Cover outdoor taps with insulated tap covers
- Inspect exposed outdoor pipes for cracks or damage
- Insulate vulnerable indoor pipes in lofts, garages, basements with foam pipe insulation or heat tape
- Keep cabinet doors open under sinks to allow warm air circulation
- Flush and inspect water heater for sediment, leaks, or corrosion
- Seal drafts around windows and doors near pipes using weather-stripping or draught excluders
- Locate and test the main water shut-off valve for smooth operation
- Check all taps, fixtures, and toilets for leaks or drips and repair as needed
- Monitor water bills for signs of hidden leaks
- Maintain heating at a minimum of 12°C even when away to prevent freezing
- Let taps drip slightly during severe freezes to keep water moving
- Bleed radiators to remove trapped air for efficient heating
- Drain garden hoses, disconnect and store indoors
- Clear gutters and downpipes to prevent blockages and ice dams
- Inspect boiler flue and vents for blockages
- Test carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries if necessary
- Clear snow from external boiler flues after heavy snowfall
- Open loft hatches during cold snaps to allow warm air circulation
- Respond immediately to any dripping pipes or leaks
- Know how to safely thaw frozen pipes: turn off main water supply, use warm towels or hairdryer on low heat, avoid open flames
- Check on vulnerable neighbours during cold weather for any plumbing issues