

Why Is It Important to Weather/Freeze Protect My Backflow Preventer and Piping?

Another major freeze event in south Louisiana and another rash of broken customer backflow preventers (BFP) and pipes that were not properly freeze protected. During major freeze events with extended sub-freezing temperatures, it is critical that any water piping and/or water carrying devices that are above grade (above the ground) be protected from freezing. During a freeze event, the water within the piping or backflow preventer can freeze and expand causing the pipe or BFP to break and result in a major water leak in the customer's plumbing and adversely affect the water system during times of heavy demands or water use. Improper freeze protection and the resulting broken water pipes or BFP's can mean expensive repairs or replacements of damaged equipment, significantly higher water bills and service fees, water service interruption until repairs or replacements have been completed for the customer; and, greater demand and stress on the water utility company to adequately provide water service to the community.



What can you do to weather/freeze protect your water piping or BFP device?



1. **Weather protect and insulate your BFP and water piping that are above grade.** You can insulate your water piping and BFP device and cover with a water protective coating or hot box to prevent the insulation from getting wet. You can use heat tape to winterize your piping and BFP; however, proper insulation and weather protection is necessary as well. Be aware that electrical freeze protection will not work during an electric power outage and therefore proper insulation and weather protection is recommended.
2. **If you can turn off your water, you can drain the water from the waterlines and BFP device for freeze protection.** This is the most effective method of freeze protection for your water piping and BFP device; however, if continual water service is necessary for domestic or fire protection service then this would not be an option. If continual water service is required, then proper weather protection and insulation is your best method for freeze protecting your water pipes and BFP devices.

Many customers incorporate their weather and freeze protection of their BFP's and water piping into their annual BFP inspection and testing to make sure that not only is their BFP working properly but that the device and related water piping are protected from the elements and major freeze events.

#