



Preventing Frozen Pipes in School Buildings

As temperatures drop, the risk of frozen pipes becomes a significant concern for school buildings. Frozen pipes can lead to costly repairs, water damage, and interruptions in school operations. The risk is especially high during the holiday break when schools are typically unoccupied, making it harder to respond to emergencies promptly. By taking a proactive approach, preferably before the winter holidays, school officials can protect their facilities and ensure a warm, safe environment for students and staff throughout the cold winter months.

Make Careful Inspections

- Check and maintain heating systems regularly.
- Check that pipes and water tanks are well lagged, especially in roof spaces.
- Check for leaks, drips and overflows as this could indicate problems.
- If buildings are left unoccupied for more than 30 days, drain all pipes, tanks and heating systems and disconnect water supplies.
- Assign someone to regularly check on the school building during breaks and weekends.

Perform Regular Maintenance

- Ensure plans for buildings showing the location of stop cocks are available in an emergency.
- Maintenance regimes should include clearing gutters of debris to reduce blockages and water overflow.
- Protect and insulate external taps and pipes from frost.
- Fit water management devices that detect falls or increases in pressure that could be due to burst pipes and automatically turn off the water supply.
- Install a bund wall around water tanks to catch leaking water, preventing damage in the building.
- Check your contents coverage to ensure you have the appropriate level of coverage for your equipment.

Ensure Proper Temperature Control

- Fit frost thermostats and check existing locations to ensure they work effectively.
- Set heating system thermostats to 51°F to maintain ambient temperature to prevent water pipes freezing.
(All information provided by [Zurich](#)).

Additional Resources:

- CHUBB: [5 Ways to Prevent Frozen and Bursting Pipes](#)
- American Red Cross: [Preventing and Thawing Frozen Pipes](#)
- Zurich Resilience Solutions: [Water Infiltration and Mold Prevention: Strategies for Contractors](#)
- Zurich Resilience Solutions: [Water Damage Prevention Program](#)

In the unfortunate event that your district experiences a pipe burst, please call NJSIG at **609-386-6060** to report your claim. If calling after standard business hours, please use NJSIG's **off-hours emergency claims hotline at 609-369-0535**.



Winter is coming, and while snow days might bring joy to students, they can also bring headaches for school administrators and facilities managers. The colder months can bring real challenges to school buildings: icy walkways, frozen pipes and unexpected closures. With the right tools and strategies, schools can stay running smoothly and safely, no matter what winter weather surprises!

Winter Prep Checklist:

Inspect and Prepare Facilities

- Check and clean roofs and gutters to prevent ice dams and water damage.
- Service HVAC systems before winter.
- Seal drafts in windows and doors to boost energy efficiency.

Snow and Ice Management

- Develop a snow/ice removal plan to prevent slips and falls.
- Stock up on salt, sand, and equipment.
- Secure professional removal services.
- Assign staff to monitor and address icy spots.

Severe Weather Communication

- Use automated systems for closure/delay updates.
- Keep emergency contacts current.
- Coordinate with local authorities for weather alerts.

Risk Management Tools

- Maintain building logs for inspections and repairs.
- Conduct winter weather drills for emergencies.
- Track incidents to improve safety measures.

Proactive Planning Leads to Safer Schools!

By taking a proactive approach to winter weather preparedness, school administrators can reduce the risks associated with severe conditions and ensure a safe learning environment. Risks may occur.

Sources:

- CHUBB: [How to Prepare Before a Winter Storm](#)
- National Weather Service: [Severe Weather Preparedness Guide for Schools](#)
- Zurich: [Clear heavy snow off your roof quickly and safely](#)
- SchoolFix.com: [An Early Winter: How Prepared is Your School?](#)

Winter Weather Alerts

Winter Weather Warning (Most Severe)

- Snow, sleet, or ice expected!
- Severe winter weather is imminent/occurring and considered a threat to life and property. Conditions can quickly become hazardous.
- Take Protective Action!

Winter Weather Watch (Moderately Severe)

- Snow, sleet, or ice possible!
- Risk of weather hazard in the near future that could pose a threat to life and/or property.
- Have a plan of action ready!
- *Keep a "watch" for weather threats!*

Winter Weather Advisory (Least Severe)

- Wintry weather expected!
- Weather specified is imminent, occurring or likely. Could cause a some inconvenience.
- Use caution!



Winter Driving Training:

This course is a concise tutorial designed for any employee who drives a work vehicle including both professional and nonprofessional drivers. The course content outlines special considerations for employees driving in inclement winter weather and includes real world driving scenarios to help keep you and others safe when you're driving in snow and/or ice. The course will review the particular hazards of winter driving, cover strategies for avoiding winter driving accidents, identify physical limitations of vehicles as they relate to winter driving, and cover skid avoidance, control, and recovery.



[Click Here for Vector Solutions full library K-12 staff trainings](#)

For questions regarding NJSIG's Value Added Services: riskcontrol@njsig.org.

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