Houston Freeze Checklist

Before the cold front, if a pipe freezes, and if one bursts. Free to print and share.

BEFORE THE FIRST FREEZE

- ☐ Wrap pipes in foam sleeves: attic runs, garage walls, anything outside or under the house.
- ☐ Find your main water shutoff now and turn it once so you know it works. Can't find it? Call 311 (City of Houston customers).
- ☐ Disconnect hoses and cover each hose bib with an insulated cover.
- ☐ Test your furnace on a mild day. If it won't light, call before the first cold night.

24 HOURS BEFORE A FORECAST FREEZE (32 F OR BELOW)

- ☐ Open cabinet doors under sinks on outside walls so room heat reaches the pipes.
- ☐ Keep the heat on and set no lower than 55 F, even if you are away.
- ☐ Know your water system (check your water bill). City of Houston asks customers NOT to drip faucets; many MUDs suggest a slow trickle. Follow your provider.
- ☐ Tankless water heater: leave it plugged in and the gas on. Drain it only if power or gas will be off for a long time.
- ☐ Generator: outdoors only, at least 20 feet from the house, never in a garage. Check your carbon monoxide alarms.
- ☐ Bring pets and potted plants inside.

IF A PIPE FREEZES

1. Find it: a faucet with a trickle or nothing while others run.
2. Open that faucet (hot and cold) so water can move as the ice melts.
3. Thaw gently with warm towels or a hair dryer, starting at the faucet end. NEVER use a flame or torch. Keep cords away from water.
4. Keep the main shutoff within reach. If water sprays or drips, close the main.
5. Frozen line inside a wall, or more than one fixture out? Call a licensed plumber.

IF A PIPE BURSTS

1. Shut off the water at the main valve and open faucets to drain the lines.
2. Stay out of standing water near outlets and appliances. Turn off power to wet areas if you can do it safely.
3. Photograph and video the damage BEFORE cleanup. Keep damaged items and the removed pipe for the adjuster.
4. Call your insurance company promptly and your licensed plumber. Make only temporary repairs until the adjuster says otherwise.
5. Keep the plumber's invoice. The City of Houston takes leak adjustment requests for freeze damage; check its rules and deadlines.

KEY NUMBERS

Smell gas or suspect a gas leak: leave the house, then call CenterPoint 713-659-2111 and 911.
Water meter or street-side shutoff (City of Houston): 311.
Insurance questions: Texas Department of Insurance 800-578-4677.

Turbo Home Services: (281) 519-6577 | free service call and diagnostic for homes
7926 Breen Drive, Suite B, Houston, TX 77064 | Latest version: turbohomeservices.com/protect-pipes-from-freezing/

Sources: National Weather Service, Houston OEM, City of Houston, CenterPoint Energy, Texas Dept. of Insurance, Texas A&M AgriLife, CPSC. General guidance; follow your providers' instructions. Updated November 2026.