

## WINTER WEATHER PRECAUTIONS

### Understanding the Risk

Every winter millions of pounds of damage are experienced by businesses and households from burst pipes, roof snow collapses and water ingress. However by taking some basic precautions and planning ahead, many incidents can be prevented or the effects of damage minimised:

### Preventing burst pipes

- ♥ Protect pipes and tanks with good quality lagging BS6700.
- ♥ Repair dripping taps and faulty ball valves as they can cause waste pipes to freeze.
- ♥ For unoccupied buildings or those with a history of freezing incidents, leave the heating set at a low level, or drain all equipment that is susceptible to condensation or freezing.
- ♥ Install a frost stat to central heating and check it's working correctly.
- ♥ Arrange for premises to be inspected at least daily in periods of very cold weather.
- ♥ Service heating systems at least annually.
- ♥ Ensure all boilers are safeguarded against freeze - particularly drain and condensate lines. Drain down all idle boilers.

### Preparedness

- ♥ Ensure that you know the layout and routes of all water, gas and electricity services within the premises and that this information is recorded and available.
- ♥ Know the location of all main and subsidiary stop-taps and ensure they are fully operational.
- ♥ Research the details of reliable local plumbing contractors and keep their contact details available.

### Minimising damage

- ♥ Isolate water at stop cock. Turn on cold taps to drain the system as quickly as possible.

- ♥ Turn off the central heating.
- ♥ Protect or remove any vulnerable contents or equipment that may be damaged.
- ♥ Never use naked flames to thaw ice plugged pipes and equipment.
- ♥ 'Ice dams' can be created on the edges of roofs, especially tiled roofs by the continual thawing and refreezing of melting snow. Water may 'back up' up the roof getting under the tiles and leaking into the building. To help prevent this keep drains open and free of ice in a safe manner. Engage specialist companies to perform this if necessary.
- ♥ Monitor the amount of snow on roofs and clear them before accumulations reach unsafe levels.



### Sprinkler systems

- ♥ For all sprinkler systems engage sprinkler contractors to make systems 'winter safe'.
- ♥ Especially vulnerable are systems protecting outdoor areas or cold areas (attics etc), valve chambers, and pump rooms.
- ♥ Heating should be maintained at all times at or above 4 degrees C. Exposed pipe work should be trace heated and lagged, and this must be routinely inspected and maintained.