

## **Frozen Pipes, Furnace Issues and Other Cold Weather Repairs**

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### **What should I do if I have frozen pipes, no heat, or problems with my heat in the cold weather?**

If your pipes are frozen, you have no heat, or there is a problem with your heat, the first thing you should do is to immediately contact your landlord. You must give notice to your landlord about the problem and give the landlord a reasonable amount of time to attempt to make the necessary repairs. You should call your landlord and then follow-up with a letter. **KEEP A COPY OF THE LETTER.**

If you contact your landlord and receive no response, or if your landlord tells you that he or she will not fix the issue, you may contact your local building inspector or County Health Department. Please see reverse for a list of local agency/department phone numbers.

### **Where can I go if I have no heat in the cold weather due to my landlord not making the repairs?**

If you do not have any heat in your apartment, and you do not have somewhere warm to stay, you may be able to seek shelter from your local County Department of Social Services. During periods of "Code Blue" when it is very cold, you may also be able to go to a local warming center. For more information, call Neighborhood Legal Services at (716) 847-0650. If your city has a local call and resolution center, you may also contact them. Please see reverse for a list of local agency/department phone numbers.

### **Who is responsible for frozen pipes in my apartment?**

It depends. As a tenant, you should do everything reasonable to try to prevent frozen pipes in cold weather. Sometimes the lease requires the tenant to take steps to prevent frozen pipes. If you have a lease, read it carefully to determine your responsibility.

#### **Some things you can do to try to prevent frozen pipes:**

- Allow water to drip slowly during cold days and nights from all of the faucets.
- Keep your thermostat at a reasonable temperature (some recommend above 60°F)
- Leave cabinet doors under the kitchen and bathroom sinks open to allow warmer air to circulate around the pipes.

### **What should I do if my personal belongings are damaged?**

It is recommended that all tenants have renters' insurance to protect the value of their personal property. Renters insurance does not cost as much as other types of insurance and can protect personal property that is not covered by the landlord's insurance.

If you do not have renters' insurance or if your insurance does not fully cover the damages, you may wish to take your landlord to Small Claims Court. Small Claims Court handles cases with claims of \$3,000 or less (\$5,000 or less in the Cities of Buffalo, Lockport, Niagara Falls and Batavia). Small Claims Court is not a separate court, but is part of your local City, Town, or Village Justice Court.

Call the Small Claims Court to find out how to file your claim. See the attached page for Small Claims Court telephone numbers. You can also look in the blue pages of the phone book for the number for the Small Claims Court in other areas. The filing fee is \$15.00 for claims under \$1,000.00. The filing fee for claims over \$1,000 is \$20.00.

\* PLEASE SEE REVERSE FOR LIST OF LOCAL AGENCY/DEPARTMENT PHONE NUMBERS

# LOCAL AGENCY & DEPARTMENT PHONE NUMBERS

## BUFFALO

Erie County Health Department: (716) 858-7690

City of Buffalo Building Inspector: (716) 851-4949

City of Buffalo Multiple Dwelling Inspector: (716) 851-4928

City of Buffalo Electrical Inspector: (716) 851-4950

City of Buffalo Plumbing Inspector: (716) 851-5067

City of Buffalo Call & Resolution Center: (716) 851-4890, or 311

City of Buffalo Court (Small Claims): (716) 845-2600

## NIAGARA FALLS & LOCKPORT

Niagara County Health Department: (716) 439-7430

City of Niagara Falls Building Inspector: (716) 286-4450

City of Lockport Building Inspector: (716) 439-6754

City of Niagara Falls Call & Resolution Center: (716) 286-4300, or 311

City of Niagara Falls Court (Small Claims): (716) 371-4100

**City of Lockport Court (Small Claims): (716) 280-6228**

## BATAVIA

Genesee County Health Department: (585) 345-6345

City of Batavia Bureau of Inspection: (585) 345-6345

City of Batavia Court (Small Claims): (585) 201-5764

## CAN'T FIND YOUR LOCAL AGENCY OR DEPARTMENT NUMBER?

Look on your local city, town, or village website or call your local clerk for a phone number. You can also look in the blue pages of your telephone book under the city, town, or village that you live in.

