

PREPARE YOUR SCHOOL FOR 2015's BIG FREEZE

Freezing temperatures are set to hit the UK this year with forecasters predicting the worst winter in half a century - prepare your school board for the winter ahead.

Freezing conditions over the last few winters led to fractured water pipes, an increase in escape of water claims and disruption to many lessons. Yet the consequences of this often predictable problem can be mitigated through some basic checks.

Protecting pipes from bursting

The threat of burst pipes after a big freeze is more common in unoccupied buildings, such as schools, over the festive holiday period.

Escape of water can cause damage to ceilings, flooring, fabric and carpet. If electrical equipment or wiring is affected, this can significantly increase the disruption caused and the claim value. It's worth regularly checking your contents policy to ensure appropriate levels of cover are in place.

Are your thermostats set correctly?

Installing frost thermostats in the coldest part of the building and setting standard thermostats higher, at around 10°C, will trigger the heating when the temperature falls and help prevent pipes from bursting.

How well are your pipes insulated?

Many school buildings have large roof spaces that are not heated and these can often be overlooked. The loft space of a well-insulated property will

be much colder, so pipes need to be well insulated, almost to the standard of pipes on outside walls.

Modern plumbing trends such as plastic pipes, whilst cheaper, can pose other risks. These feature push-fit joints over traditional copper and brazed joints which are less strong and, over time, plastic pipes may become less resilient.

Prepare your board this winter

Our top tips provide you with precautionary measures which can be taken to protect your school:

Careful inspection

- 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
- Roof spaces should be inspected to ensure insulation materials are in good condition and correctly installed
- Ensure that automatic sprinkler systems are fully maintained and that alternate systems are switched to air during winter months.

Regular maintenance

- Ensure plans for buildings showing the location of stopcocks are available in an emergency
- Maintenance regimes should include clearing gutters of debris to reduce

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- blockages and water overflow
- Protect and insulate external taps and pipes from frost
- Fit water management devices that detect changes in pressure which 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
- Roofs, ridge tiles and chimneys should be inspected to ensure they are in a good state of repair.

Temperature control

- Fit frost thermostats and check existing locations to ensure they work effectively
- Set heating system thermostats to 10°C to maintain ambient temperature to prevent water pipes freezing.

How can we help you?

For more information on managing winter weather please contact Zurich Municipal on **0800 252 1901** or **info@zurichmunicipal.com**
You can also read newsworthy articles at **newsandviews.zurich.co.uk**