

# MIKE'S Tool Box

*Mike Forner's Home Services:*

**MY MISSION IS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR YOU  
AND YOUR FAMILY BY PROVIDING PROMPT,  
COMPREHENSIVE, EXPERT HOME MAINTENANCE AND  
REPAIRS. I WILL TREAT YOUR HOME AS IF IT WERE MY OWN!**



## Tips To Avoid Freezing Pipes

What's worse than a major home maintenance disaster? How about several major home maintenance disasters at once? For the quarter-million families who have their homes ruined and their lives disrupted each winter because of frozen water pipes, frigid nights can very quickly turn to ongoing, inconvenient, extremely expensive ordeals.

In cold and warmer climates alike, pipes freeze for a combination of three central reasons: quick drops in temperature, poor insulation, and thermostats set too low. Both plastic and copper pipes can burst when they freeze, and recovering from frozen pipes is not as simple as calling a plumber. A 1/8-inch crack in a pipe can spew up to 250 gallons of water a day, causing flooding, serious structural damage, and the immediate potential for mold.



In the United States, frozen pipes cause a huge amount of damage each year; unlike natural disasters, this disaster is largely preventable. By taking a few simple precautions, you can help save yourself the mess, money, and aggravation that frozen pipes can cause.

### **Your Best Bet: Don't Let It Happen**

There are a number of preventative steps you can take to keep your pipes from freezing. Here are a few simple tips:

**Before The Cold:** Remember the three central causes of frozen pipes? Quick drops in temperature, poor insulation, and thermostats set too low. You can prepare by protecting your home during the warmer months. Here's how:

- Have pipes in your home's crawl spaces and attic insulated, even if you live in a climate where freezing is uncommon. Exposed pipes are most susceptible to freezing. Remember: The more insulation you use, the better protected your pipes will be. Heat tape or thermostatically controlled heat cables can also be used to wrap pipes.
- Have leaks that allow cold air inside near where pipes are located sealed. Look for air leaks around electrical wiring, dryer vents, and pipes, and use caulk or insulation to keep the cold out. With severe cold, even a tiny opening can let in enough cold air to cause a pipe to freeze.
- Before winter hits, disconnect garden hoses and, if possible, use an indoor valve to shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house.

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*Stay tuned for next month's Holiday Hazard Checklist!*



## Upcoming Events In November That Might Interest You...

\* To share in the holiday season we will be more than happy to install your Christmas lights, nativity scenes, menorah, Christmas trees...anything!



\* Daylight Savings time ends Sunday, November 2nd so don't forget to "fall back" and change your smoke & carbon monoxide detector batteries!

\* Election Day is Tuesday, November 4th.



\* Veteran's Day is Tuesday, November 11th.



\* Thanksgiving Day is Thursday, November 27th.



\* University of Michigan Home Football  
Schedule for November 2014:

When: 11/01/2014

Who: Indiana - Homecoming

Where: Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, MI  
What Time: 3:30pm ET

When: 11/22/2014

Who: Maryland

Where: Michigan Stadium, Ann Arbor, MI  
What Time: TBA

## Tips To Avoid Freezing Pipes Continued...

**When The Mercury Drops:** Even if you've taken the right preventative steps, extreme weather conditions can still harm your pipes. Here are a few more steps you can take:

- A trickle of hot and cold water might be all it takes to keep your pipes from freezing. Let warm water drip overnight, preferably from a faucet on an outside wall.
- Keep your thermostat set at the same temperature during both day and night. You might be in the habit of turning down the heat when you're asleep, but further drops in the temperature – more common overnight – could catch you off guard and freeze your pipes.
- Open cabinet doors to allow heat to get to un-insulated pipes under sinks and appliances near exterior walls.

**Before You Leave:** Travelling in the winter months might be good for the soul, but don't forget to think about your pipes before you leave. What can you do?

- Set the thermostat in your house no lower than 55°F (12°C).
- Ask a friend or neighbor to check your house daily to make sure it's warm enough to prevent freezing.
- Shut off and drain the water system. Be aware that if you have a fire protection sprinkler system in your house, it may be deactivated when you shut off the water.

**If Your Pipes Do Freeze:** What do you do if your pipes still freeze, despite your best preventative measures? First step: Don't panic. Just because they're frozen doesn't mean they've already burst. Here's what you can do:

- If you turn on your faucets and nothing comes out, leave the faucets turned on and call Mike Forner's Home Services.
- Do not use electrical appliances in areas of standing water: You could be electrocuted.
- Never try to thaw a pipe with a torch or other open flame because it could cause a fire hazard. Water damage is preferable to burning down your house!
- You may be able to thaw a frozen pipe with the warm air from a hair dryer. Start by warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible, working toward the coldest section of pipe.
- If your water pipes have already burst, turn off the water at the main shutoff valve in the house; leave the water faucets turned on. Make sure everyone in your family knows where the water shutoff valve is and how to open and close it.

## Preventing Ice Dams

Take care of trouble spots and you will enjoy a winter free of icicles—and the damage they can do to your roof. Stopping ice dams is simple, in principle: Just keep the entire roof the same temperature as the eaves. You do that by increasing ventilation, adding insulation, and sealing off every possible air leak that might warm the underside of the roof, as shown in the illustration below. By taking care of these trouble spots, listed here in order of priority, you should enjoy a winter free of dams and use less energy to boot.

**1. Ventilate Eaves And Ridge:** A ridge vent paired with continuous soffit vents circulates cold air under the entire roof. Both ridge and soffit vents should have the same size openings and provide at least 1 square foot of opening for every 300 square feet of attic floor. Place baffles at the eaves to maintain a clear path for the airflow from the soffit vents.

**2. Cap the Hatch:** An unsealed attic hatch or whole-house fan is a massive opening for heat to escape. Cover them with weather-stripped caps made from foil-faced foam board held together with aluminum tape.

**3. Exhaust to the Outside:** Make sure that the ducts connected to the kitchen, bathroom, and dryer vents all lead outdoors through either the roof or walls, but never through the soffit.

**4. Add Insulation:** More insulation on the attic floor keeps the heat where it belongs. To find how much insulation your attic needs, check with your local building department.

**5. Install Sealed Can Lights:** Old-style recessed lights give off great plumes of heat and can't be insulated without creating a fire hazard. Replace them with sealed "IC" fixtures, which can be covered with insulation.

**6. Flash Around Chimneys:** Bridge the gap between chimney and house framing with L-shaped metal flashing held in place with unbroken beads of an approved sealant. Using canned spray foam or insulation isn't fire safe.

**8. Caulk Penetrations:** Seal around electrical cables and vent pipes with approved sealant. Also, look for any spots where light shines up from below or the insulation is stained black by the dirt from passing air.





## **Forgiveness And Serendipity**

By: Nancy Cohen-koan

This Thanksgiving I witnessed forgiveness and serendipity in action. My sister was coming to town and I wanted to arrange a pain-free time together as we are still trying to get to know each other as adults. It's a cliché to talk about holidays and family... we all know how stressful it can be and after Sandy, I wanted to avoid any additional problems, including where to eat. So when an old friend invited us both for a free buffet being offered up by a neighborhood restaurant, I leapt at the opportunity.

My sister, a bit bourgeois, was a little less excited, imagining a gray cafeteria filled with homeless souls and steam tables. Instead we found ourselves in a lovely ethnic restaurant, lined with long tables with, if not homeless, family-less people taking advantage of the chance to not have to cook. After some fumbling, our little group was seated next to a couple who were well ahead of us in the free wine department. We exchanged pleasantries as well as concerns over whether there really was food. After a few Pinots, we all began to find each other on the same page and my neighbor to the left, Sally, shared with me her shocking revelation - she had just noticed that the diner sitting to her left, was a woman she hadn't seen for 35 years, ever since their horrible car accident together. Apparently Clare, once a dear friend, had encouraged Sally to drive even though she didn't have a license. Clare was busy pouring over maps of mountain roads when a strong wind blew one of the maps across Sally's face. She immediately lost control of the car, and flipped over.

Clare, badly hurt, blamed Sally for the mishap before entering into a long, drawn-out lawsuit. They never spoke again. Now, 35 years later they are sitting next to each other at a random, free Thanksgiving dinner. How could this happen?

Sally was sure Clare hadn't recognized her and asked me, a total stranger, what she should do. I love redemption stories almost as much as drama and quickly suggested that she must seize the moment, though it was best to wait until we all had full plates of Thanksgiving fare. The time standing in the buffet line also gave me a chance to observe Clare. She looked as normal as anyone else at the dinner and so when we sat down with our food, I said "go!" Perhaps it was the generosity of the restaurant or the spirit of the holiday, but the two of them began talking and never stopped until dessert... 35 years of anger washed away with turkey and the trimmings. Synchronicity, yes... God? Who knows? I only hoped that my sister and I would do as well. To insure that possibility we ate like piglets for three days.

Time may heal all wounds but good food speeds the process.



## **Second-Day Fried Stuffing Bites with Cranberry Sauce Pesto Recipe**

### ***Ingredients:***

- Leftover stuffing
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons milk
- 1 cup seasoned bread crumbs
- 1 cup cranberry sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup walnuts
- Oil, for frying

### ***Directions:***

1. Preheat oil to 350 degrees F.  
Cut leftover stuffing into bite-sized cubes and set aside.
2. In a small bowl whisk eggs and milk.
3. Coat each stuffing bite with this egg wash, then dredge in the bread crumbs until fully coated and set aside.
4. In a food processor blend cranberry sauce, pepper and walnuts and set aside.
5. Once oil is at temperature fry each piece of stuffing until golden brown about 4 minutes.
6. Drain on a paper towel and serve with cranberry pesto.



## Giving Thanks

For the hay and the corn and the wheat that is reaped,  
For the labor well done, and the barns that are heaped,  
For the sun and the dew and the sweet honeycomb,  
For the rose and the song and the harvest brought home --

Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving!

For the trade and the skill and the wealth in our land,  
For the cunning and strength of the workingman's hand,  
For the good that our artists and poets have taught,  
For the friendship that hope and affection have brought --

Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving!

For the homes that with purest affection are blest,  
For the season of plenty and well-deserved rest,  
For our country extending from sea unto sea;  
The land that is known as the "Land of the Free" --

Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving!

~Author Unknown



## Wise Home Owner Tip:

### 8 Energy-Efficient Home Improvements That Save Money

As energy costs rise, you might be looking for ways to be more energy-efficient without breaking the bank. Here are eight money-smart moves to consider when making home renovations.

**Anything "low flow":** In addition to saving water, low-flow fixtures will save you more than a buck or two. Inexpensive and easily installed, low-flow fixtures can reduce your home water consumption by as much as 50 percent and can save you up to \$145 per year.

**Insulation:** Insulation keeps your house warm in the winter, cool in the summer and reduces heating and cooling costs by as much as 20 percent, according to Green Energy Solutions, Inc.

**LED Light Bulbs:** Fluorescent bulbs last 4 to 10 times longer than regular light bulbs.

**A clean dishwasher:** Modern dishwashers use an average of 5.8 gallons of water per cycle, while older models can use as much as 10 gallons per cycle. Or, you could clean and repair your current washer if it's only a few years old.

**A programmable thermostat:** Programmable thermostats have become popular due to their energy- and money-saving benefits. When used properly, this device can save users up to \$150 per year, and it's generally more accurate than a regular thermostat.

**Weather Stripping:** You might be surprised to find how much money you could save by patching up that draft in your kitchen or bedroom. In homes that haven't been weather stripped, air leaks account for 20 to 40 percent of heating and cooling loss.

**A tankless water heater:** Tankless water heaters allow users to shave 20 percent off their water bill. In addition to lasting 5 to 10 years longer than tank heaters, tankless heaters never run out of hot water. Plus, you may get a federal tax rebate if you purchase one.

**A ceiling fan:** A ceiling fan will help keep your home at a comfortable temperature while reducing your energy bill by about \$15 per year.

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## Did You Know...

That Carbon Monoxide is often called the silent killer? It is an invisible, odorless and colorless gas. It is created when fuels are burned incompletely. If you do not have Carbon Monoxide detectors in your home, you should consider making this (possibly) life-saving purchase.

## Uplifting Quote of The Month

*"Success is going from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm."*

~ Winston Churchill

## Joke Of The Month

A man and his wife are dining at a table in a plush restaurant, and the husband keeps staring at an intoxicated lady swigging her drink as she sits alone at a nearby table.

The wife asks, "Do you know her?"

"Yes," sighs the husband, "She's my ex-girlfriend. I understand she took to drinking right after we split up seven years ago, and I hear she hasn't been sober since."

"My God!" says the wife, "Who would think a person could go on celebrating that long."