

# Cold Weather Alert

Freezing weather conditions can wreak havoc on a *Fire Sprinkler System*. But a properly designed, installed, tested and maintained system should be a functioning system in any climate. Fire Sprinkler Systems normally freeze faster than plumbing pipe because the water doesn't flow unless there's a fire. Low points in a Dry Pipe Sprinkler System where condensation can collect are susceptible to freezing, as are the smaller pipe diameters, such as one to two inch pipes, in a Wet Pipe Sprinkler System.

The most important step in maintaining a sprinkler system during the winter months is also the simplest: **KEEP THE HEAT ON**. National building codes recommend that a sprinklered room be maintained at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or warmer to avoid freeze-ups. Go below that and you're flirting with disaster. Without heat, any sprinkler system can freeze.

If heating is impractical or you have a Dry System, low point drains **MUST** be drained **AT LEAST MONTHLY**, if not more frequently, to avoid freezing disasters. Failure to properly maintain low point drains will allow condensation to fill in the piping, which will be the easiest place for damage to occur.

Without a properly maintained system, water in the sprinkler piping network will freeze when a cold front blows through. As water freezes it expands the pipe and places pressure on the pipe, fittings and sprinkler heads until something breaks. The damage usually does not become noticeable until after the building and the sprinkler system heat back up. As the ice in the pipes begins to thaw, water from the broken items begins leaking. In the end, not only has the sprinkler system been damaged but so has everything and anything else in the water's path, such as office furniture, computers, carpeting, storage, etc...

It's not unusual for an owner and/or insurance company to spend tens of thousands of dollars in damages from a sprinkler freeze. Moreover, as long as a sprinkler system is damaged, its ability to fight fire is greatly compromised, so the building itself is left open to catastrophe. Call **Metro Fire & Safety Equip. Co., Inc.** today to set up your monthly maintenance program, which is a small price to pay compared to the water damage that a frozen sprinkler system can cause.

**COMMON MYTH:** Protective measures for sprinkler system piping exposed to brief periods of freezing are the same steps recommended for all standard water pipes. This is not true, fire sprinkler pipes cannot be insulated or heat taped.

---

## **METRO FIRE & SAFETY EQUIP. CO., INC.**

509 WASHINGTON AVENUE  
CARLSTADT, NJ 07071  
PHONE: (201) 635-0400 FAX (201) 635-0410  
WWW.METROFIRE.COM

BUSINESS PERMIT ID # P00111