



NEWS RELEASE

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(Water Calls Keep Firefighters Busy)

A flurry of broken water pipes in homes and businesses frozen by the week's surprisingly cold temperatures prompted citizens to call Hillsboro firefighters for help. Once the temperatures rose near 32-degrees on Tuesday (12/8/09) and the broken pipes began thawing, firefighters began responding to calls for assistance. The process repeated itself again on Wednesday and Thursday. Starting at noon on Tuesday, there were nine water problem calls in the City of Hillsboro. On Wednesday that number jumped to 21 calls. Firefighters, both career and volunteer, were able to shut off the water and use water vacuums to pick up much of the water. The homeowners had to then contact their plumber to arrange for repairs and inform their insurance company of the damages.

The largest call occurred on Thursday at the Rosewood Park Assisted Living Center and resulted from a fire sprinkler pipe in the attic that froze, broke and began leaking. Water leaked into 12 apartments on the first and second floors impacting 13 residents. Center staff quickly relocated the affected residents to safe areas while firefighters shut off the sprinkler system and used a fleet of water vacuums to remove the bulk of the water that seeped into the apartments. The sprinkler pipe in the attic space is normally dry because it is located in an unheated area. Staff summoned their sprinkler system vendor to the scene to repair the pipes and determine why the normally dry pipe had water in it. Damage estimate is still being tallied. Hillsboro Fire and Rescue reminds citizens that to avoid frozen water pipes:

- Close off crawl spaces under your home.
- Remove water hoses from outdoor faucets.
- Cover outdoor faucets with insulation if they lack interior shut off valves. Drain them if they have an interior shutoff.
- Indoors, leave cabinet doors open under sinks to allow the room heat to circulate
- Leave inside faucets at the end of a plumbing run dripping slightly to relieve pressure if the pipes do freeze.
- Use an electric hair dryer to thaw a frozen pipe. Never use an open flame device such as a torch.

For more fire and life safety information, visit: www.ci.hillsboro.or.us/fire or call 503-681-6166.

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Photo Caption: Water Problem 0093.jpg

Hillsboro Firefighter Tyrus Wells uses a water vacuum to remove water in a carpet following a broken water pipe in an assisted living center.