

Winterizing exterior faucets

Do this before the outdoor temperature first drops below freezing.



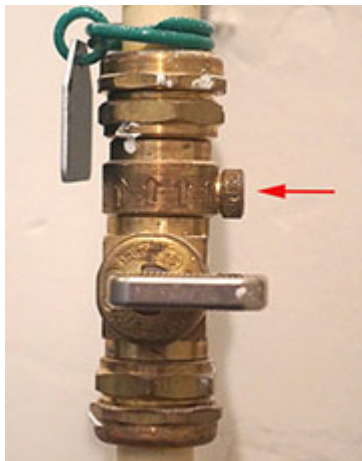
To prevent freezing of the plumbing for your exterior garden faucets, you will need to shut off the water that flows to them, and drain the residual water that remains between the shutoff valve and the faucet itself. If you have an irrigation system and use Foothills Irrigation service, they may have already done this for you.

Disconnect any garden hoses. This is important. Stretch the hoses out and drain them, then coil up the hoses and join the two ends of each hose together. Store the hoses indoors, laying flat or hanging over a curved hose hanger. Don't hang hoses from a nail – that kinks them permanently.

Shut off the water valves that serve the faucets. The valves are probably quite close to the water heater and furnace, and have green metal tags on them. Just turn the handle of each valve so that it is 90 degrees to the pipe.



Open the outdoor faucets and let them drain. Only a little or no water will come out. Leave the faucets open, and go back to the valves.



Get an old towel or rag and a catch basin and hold the basin below one valve. Using a pair of pliers, *gently* grip the little brass vent plug (red arrow in the picture) and unscrew it just until it moves. Using your fingers, unscrew it further *very slowly*.

If the water valves are in the basement, they are below the level of the outdoor faucets and a quart or so of water will come out of the vent plug. **Don't remove the plug completely** or water will gush out. Just let it run out slowly until it stops, then you can take the plug out completely. At the same time, the outdoor section of the pipe will drain out through the open faucet. After a couple of minutes, put the plug back in and tighten it with the pliers. Just snug will do. Then do the same with the second valve.

If the water valves are on the ground floor, it is likely that no water at all will come out of the vent plug but have a basin and towel just in case. Wait for any water to stop dripping out, then remove the plug completely. You will probably hear a faint bubbling sound as the pipe drains outdoors. After a couple of minutes, put the plug back in and tighten it with the pliers. Just snug will do. Then do the same with the second valve.

Now close the outdoor faucets. When the weather is warm again you can open the valves inside the house and hook up the hoses again.