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## Don't get bitten by the 'Beast from the East': top tips for surviving Siberian shivers

Britain is bracing itself to battle against bitter weather this week, with a cold snap sweeping in from Siberia.

Heavy snow showers are expected in parts of the country, with the wind chill due to make temperatures feel a frosty -10°C.

The icy spell is one of the worst since the "Big Freeze" of 2010, when the mercury plunged to as low as -20°C in parts, and Halifax Home Insurance received 2,500 claims for frozen pipes.

This is in comparison to just 42 frozen pipes claims received across 2017, a year that was spared such freezing conditions.

**David Rochester, Head of Underwriting, Halifax Home Insurance, said:** *"The cold weather highlights just how important it is to maintain your home against the elements.*

*"Properties are more susceptible to frozen pipes when the temperatures suddenly drop. Keeping your heating on for a few extra hours overnight is an easy way to prevent this. If it saves thousands of pounds in the event of a pipe freeze, that's a price worth paying."*

**Jessica Turner, Senior Manager, Weather Modelling, Halifax Home Insurance, added:** *"Despite the fact that we're emerging from the depths of winter, spring can still hold a sting in its tail.*

*"We fortunately don't experience such severe weather every year. However, Siberian winds can travel over to reach the UK, resulting in disruption, freezing temperatures and snow.*

*"Taking active steps to protect properties, particularly during better weather, means that when cold weather arrives, homeowners can rest assured that their homes will be able to deal with the extreme elements."*

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Halifax Home Insurance is offering the following tips to handle the freeze with ease...

1. **Set your thermostat to a minimum temperature** around 12°C, even overnight – the heating costs are justified if it avoids a costly pipe freeze. Many thermostats have a winter option that routinely heats the system to keep pipes at the right temperature.
2. **Disconnect and drain all hosepipes**, sprinkler systems and water features that are connected to external water outlets.
3. **Insulate exposed pipes** in basements, attics, garages, kitchen cabinets and on the outside of the house. Use UL-listed heat tape, or foam rubber insulation where pipes are exposed to cold moving air.
4. **If you're going on holiday** it might be worth shutting off and draining your water system (ask your provider for information on how to do this) or asking a trusted neighbor or friend to pop in regularly while you're away.
5. **Make sure you know where your stopcock is** so that you can turn it off quickly in an emergency and can prevent a potential flood. The stopcock is the valve that controls the cold water system in your home. Stopcocks are usually found in the kitchen, below the sink unit. However in some houses the stopcock is found in a front or back hall or in a larder unit beside the sink unit.
6. **Be sure to have your Home Insurance details to hand** in case the worst happens. Halifax Home Insurance can provide customers with useful information, such as the number for a reputable plumber, through its 24-hour Emergency Homeline.

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## Editors' Notes:

1. Statistics from Halifax Home Insurance in-house claims data
2. Halifax Home Solutions is underwritten by Lloyds Bank General Insurance Limited and has a 5 Star Defaqto rating. Halifax Home Insurance is underwritten by Lloyds Bank General Insurance Limited. The 24-hour emergency hotline is provided by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance plc (RSA).
3. Halifax Home Insurance offers its customers a 24-hour Emergency Homeline, manned by experts who can offer useful information and advice on how to manage a home emergency, such as providing the number of a reputable plumber for emergency call-outs.
4. Should the worst happen, Halifax Home Insurance can send a Personal Claims Consultant (PCC) at their discretion if they feel that one of their policyholders needs extra support. PCCs act as a single point of contact on major claims, meeting customers face-to-face to discuss all aspects of the incident and personally see each claim through from beginning to end.
5. For more information visit our pages on [snow and ice](#).

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