

Press Release

Don't be left in the cold this winter advises water supply company

10 November 2011

Don't be left in the cold and Get Ready for Winter.

That's the message from Sembcorp Bournemouth Water (SBW) which supplies drinking water to approximately half a million people in parts of Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire.

The company is backing a national campaign to encourage home owners, businesses and other organisations to prepare for the cold weather.

The campaign – called Get Ready For Winter – is sponsored by the Cabinet Office and Water UK.

Supporters include the Government, local public bodies, the voluntary sector, regulators and the commercial and independent sector.

Last year's freezing temperatures, the third cold winter in a row, resulted in record property insurance claims totalling £1.3 billion.

According to the Association of British Insurers (ABI) 103,000 property claims were for burst pipe damage costing a total of £680 million with each claim averaging £7,200.

General advice to householders and businesses from SBW includes:

- Dripping taps and faulty ball valves are signs of trouble.
- Fit new washers now to avoid problems later.
- Dripping water can freeze.
- The best way to avoid frozen or burst pipes is to protect them.
- Protection will delay freezing in very cold conditions.
- There is no substitute for keeping on some heating.
- Lag the storage cistern in the loft and any pipes likely to freeze.
- Avoid draughts. Close windows near pipes and cisterns.
- Keep your home warm, especially where there are pipes.
- If your home is left empty during the winter, leave the central heating on a low thermostat setting, timed to come on for an hour or two a day at the coldest time.
- The safest protection if you are away from home for any length of time is to drain down all systems.

Roger Harrington, SBW's Managing Director, said: "The severe cold last winter brought misery and big costs to some people as a result of frozen or burst water pipes in their home or business.

"We don't know what weather the coming winter will bring, but a few simple steps can really help to avoid problems. As always it's best to think about this early, especially if you plan to be away when it may turn colder."

For more handy tips and advice go to SBW's website at www.sembcorpbw.co.uk or www.direct.gov.uk