

SECTION: Public Works		POLICY #: PW-001
Date Approved: November 2, 2015		Frozen Water Service
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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Frozen Water Service Policy is to prevent and manage interruptions to the supply of municipal water caused by the freezing of water service between the building or residence and the water distribution piping.

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the Frozen Water Service Policy are:

- To implement proactive measures to prevent the freezing of water service;
- To provide timely and effective communications to residents and businesses to advise of the potential for the freezing of water service and actions to mitigate;
- To provide customers whose water service has frozen with timely access to continuous, reliable, safe potable water; and
- To clarify the policies and procedures regarding water and sewer fees reimbursements associated with frozen water lines.

PROPERTY OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

The owner of any commercial, industrial, institutional or residential building shall:

- Keep in good repair and be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the water service line between the building and the street line (property line);
- Maintain adequate heat to premise plumbing to prevent service line freezing;
- Promptly report any actual or suspected frozen service issues to the municipality;
- Permit safe access to their property by municipal staff should service be requested to address frozen service issues;
- Follow instructions and communications provided by the municipality to prevent water freeze up or the reoccurrence; and
- If requested, provide continuous running of water to ensure that they have plumbing and drains to accommodate continuous, unattended running of water.

MUNICIPAL PROCEDURES RE: POTENTIAL FREEZE UP

The municipality will monitor temperatures and frost depths to determine when the freeze up of water service has the potential of occurring. When there is a potential for freeze up, the municipality shall provide media releases and advisories on the municipal website, the local newspaper, and/or various social media formats. Such notices shall advise property owners of their responsibility to ensure buildings have sufficient heat in order to keep the water meter and interior piping from freezing. Once the municipality has evidence that the frost depth is impacting water service, municipal staff will commence door-to-door notices requesting that the string provided be placed under the toilet tank flap to allow for continuous movement of water.

This circulation notice will be provided to a list of properties (the potential freeze up list) that have shallow water service and potential water freeze up on municipal property.

For those properties on the potential freeze up list, municipal staff will take water meter readings both prior to and after notification of the request to continuously run water. When municipal staff have determined the potential for water freeze up is over, a further notice will be delivered to those properties to remove the string or shut off the tap that has been allowing for water movement.

In the event that the depth of frost and continued cold temperatures begin to affect properties beyond the potential freeze up list, the municipality may, at their discretion, issue a further notice recommending that property owners consider running water continuously to prevent potential freeze up.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The following procedure and customer service functions will be applied to address issues due to frozen water service;

Within 24 hours of receipt of notification of water freeze up, the municipality will visit the property and/or contact the customer. Municipal staff will make recommendations to the property owner and document these on a site specific basis. Such recommendations may require the customer to contact a plumber if it is felt that the freeze up is a result of conditions or circumstances on private property. In such cases, the cost will be borne by the customer. If it is determined that municipal piping contributed to the freeze up, arrangements will be made to attempt to thaw the frozen water service at no cost to the customer. Regardless of responsibility where services are unable to be thawed by mechanical equipment, the municipality will attempt to make arrangements to install a temporary service line from a neighbouring property or hydrant at no cost to the customer.

The municipality will make every effort to assist the property owner, but reserves the right to not install a temporary service line should field conditions not support or it is not technically feasible. The municipality will take meter readings for both properties at the time the temporary water service line is installed as well as when it is removed for the purposes of providing water adjustments. Where property owner(s) arrange for temporary water service line(s) as a result of freeze up that is not attributed to municipal piping, it will be their responsibility to notify the municipality to take meter readings for the purposes of providing water billing adjustments to the supplier of the water.

WATER SERVICE BILLING ADJUSTMENTS

The following procedures will be applied to customers affected by frozen service:

- Customers that have been instructed by circulation of door-to-door notice to run water to prevent freeze up based upon a predetermined list of properties (the potential freeze up list) that have shallow water service and potential water freeze up on municipal property will have their water/sewage billings adjusted based on average historical consumption for the previous billing period.
- Where it has been determined the freeze up is a result of frozen municipal piping, customers requested to run water will have their water/sewage billings adjusted based on the average historical consumption for the previous billing period.
- The Flat fee for water/sewage billings will apply to all properties, regardless of whether they receive a temporary alternative supply of water or not;
- Customers who choose to run water either on their own initiative or as a result of a municipal notice “recommending that property owners consider running water continuously to prevent potential freeze up” will not be provided with any water/sewage billing adjustments.

- The Municipality will not be responsible for the payment of home based energy costs for customers instructed to, or voluntarily, apply heat to exposed plumbing to solve or prevent service line freezing.
- Customers who have supplied water through a temporary service line to a neighbouring property will have their water/sewage billings adjusted based on the average historical consumption for the previous billing period.
- Customers being supplied with water through a temporary service line from a neighbouring property will have their water/sewage billings adjusted based on the average historical consumption for the previous billing period.