

Frozen Water Services Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Frozen Water Services Policy is to prevent and manage interruptions to the municipal supply of water caused by the temporary freezing of water services.

Objectives

The main objective of this policy is to implement proactive measures to prevent the freezing of water services.

Definitions

Customer: any property owner who has an active water and/or wastewater account with the Municipality of North Perth.

O.R.O.: Overall Responsible Operator.

Temporary Water Service: a temporary supply of water to a Customer who is without water due to frozen water pipes.

Temporary Water Service Donor: a Customer willing to provide a Temporary Water Service to a neighbour through a Temporary Water Service Line connected to the donating Customer's own water pipes.

Temporary Water Service Line: a water pipe used to provide a Temporary Water Service.

Vulnerable Customer:

- Health care facilities (Hospital, clinic, dialysis centres)
- Nursing Homes
- Schools and daycares
- Residents with special needs

Water Pipe: any pipe, main, plumbing, hose or appurtenance through which water is provided from the municipality to the customer.

Policy

1. All water services between the water main and the curb stop shut-off valve are considered Municipal property. All water services from the curb stop shut-off valve to the building are considered private property.
2. If a customer suspects that their water service has frozen, the customer should contact the municipal office by telephone Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm by calling 519-291-2950. After hours on-call operations can be reached between 4:30 pm and 8:30 am, and on weekends, by calling 519-291-2940.
3. All frozen water service requests received will be placed on a priority list on a “first come, first served” basis. Upon receipt of a service request, municipal staff will aim, wherever feasible, to initiate response within twenty-four hours. Service requests from a Vulnerable Customer will be placed at the top of the priority list.
4. When water services are determined to have frozen on private property, the property owner will be responsible for all costs associated with the thawing process. When water services are determined to have frozen on municipal property, or when the origin of the frozen service cannot be determined, the Municipality will be responsible for all costs associated with the thawing process.
5. A record is kept of all property addresses that have had the water pipes freeze in previous years (since 2013). When the possibility of frozen services is anticipated, the Manager of Environmental Services or the O.R.O. will provide a letter to each of these property owners, advising them to run a constant stream of cold water from one tap in their house. The stream of water should be approximately the size of a drinking straw (1/4” or 0.5cm in diameter). It is the property owner’s responsibility to ensure that the running water is done in accordance with the guidelines set out in the letter. If a customer disregards the notice to run a constant stream of cold water from one tap in their house, the customer will be responsible for all costs associated with attempts to thaw the water piping. The Municipality assumes no responsibility for damages caused as a result of the running water.
6. When customers are advised through a letter from the Manager of Environmental Services or the O.R.O. to run their cold water tap to avoid freezing, they will be billed based on the bi-monthly base rate service charge (monthly base rate service charge if commercial property) as per By-Law 160-2015 Schedule “I”. The adjusted bill may not reflect the entire time that the resident left their tap running, but will reflect the majority of that time. If the customer does not receive

a letter from the Manager of Environmental Services or the O.R.O. but decides on their own to let the water run to prevent freezing, they will be responsible for all consumption during that time period.

7. All customers who will be leaving their properties vacant for the winter months are advised to have their water services temporarily shut off by the Public Works Department and pay the applicable fees as outlined in By-Law 160-2015 Schedule “Q”. Any customers who will be leaving their properties vacant for an extended period of time during the winter months are advised to have someone check in on the house daily during cold weather in case of frozen water services.
8. If a customer is advised to let their water run and the customer does not follow the instructions provided or turns off the water for any period of time, the customer will be responsible for covering all costs incurred should the water service freeze, even if the frozen section occurs in pipes that are on Municipal property (as defined in section 1). Water pipes with the stream of water running through them (as defined in section 5) will not freeze.
9. Customers who are not willing to wait for the Municipality to thaw their water service may attempt to thaw the pipe themselves or they may hire a contractor on their own. Customers who thaw their water service on their own, or hire a contractor on their own, will be responsible for all associated costs even if the pipe is found to be on Municipal property.
10. The Municipality is not responsible for any damages resulting from pipe thawing attempts of individuals or contractors, returning property (which needed to be disturbed for the thawing process) back to normal, or any damages suffered due to delays in thawing water pipes.
11. If Public Works personnel and/or a contractor hired by the Municipality are unable to thaw the water pipes, the Municipality shall attempt to install a Temporary Water Service from a neighbouring property. Prior to installing a Temporary Water Service, a **Temporary Water Service Connection Authorization Form** must be completed and provided to the Municipality. (Attached)
12. When a Temporary Water Service is installed between neighbouring properties both parties will be billed based on the bi-monthly base rate service charge (monthly base rate service charge if commercial property) as per By-Law 160-2015 Schedule “Q”.

- 13.** Public Works personnel will take a water meter reading from both parties before installing a Temporary Water Service and when uninstalling a Temporary Water Service in order to ensure accurate billing.
- 14.** When water pipes are frozen, sanitary sewer charges will be calculated based on the bi-monthly base rate service charge (monthly base rate service charge if commercial property) as per By-Law 160-2015 Schedule “Q”.
- 15.** Customers who receive notification from the Manager of Environmental Services or the O.R.O. to run a constant stream of water will also be notified by the Manager of Environmental Services or the O.R.O. of when they can stop running their water as the risk of frozen water services is no longer anticipated.
- 16.** The Manager of Environmental Services or the O.R.O. may in certain circumstances recommend that ALL residents on municipal water systems run their tap according to this policy, to prevent frozen water services. Full metered consumption will be charged during this time, except where outlined in section 5 of this policy. Every reasonable attempt will be made to contact the residents through social media, municipal website, etc. Similar notice will be given when residents are able to discontinue running their tap.