

CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



POLICY	Frozen Water Pipe Policy
CATEGORY	IDE – Environmental Services, Water Services
APPROVED BY	Guelph City Council (pending)
EFFECTIVE DATE	November 2015
REVISION DATE	November 2018

POLICY PURPOSE AND GOALS

The overall purpose of this Frozen Water Pipe Policy is to prevent and manage interruptions to the City’s supply of water, caused by the temporary freezing of City and/or Customer Water Pipes, so that Customers maintain reliable, continuous access to water.

Core goals of this Policy include:

- 1) To implement proactive first priority measures to prevent the freezing of Water Pipes.
- 2) To provide Customers who have frozen Water Pipes with timely access to continuous, reliable, safe, Potable water.
- 3) To recognize the special needs of Vulnerable Customers and implement processes to expedite resources required to restore their access to continuous, reliable, safe, and Potable water in frozen Water Pipe events.
- 4) To implement the elements of this Policy in an effective and efficient manner with available resources.
- 5) To improve the impact and value of this Policy through the engagement, beyond Water Services, of other City departments, public agencies, and third parties as part of response efforts.
- 6) To maintain compliance with utility regulations and health guidelines, while best managing the City’s water resources during responses to frozen Water Pipe events.

POLICY DESCRIPTION

This Frozen Water Pipe Policy is comprised of programs that are implemented to achieve the above purpose and goals. Often the programs overlap and work in tandem.

The specific programs comprising this Policy include the following:

- 1) Freeze Prevention Program: a program that requires Customers to take specific actions to prevent the freezing of Water Pipes.
- 2) Frozen Water Pipe Thawing Program: a program whereby Water Services may, based on available technology, and where resources allow, attempt to thaw frozen Water Pipes which are readily accessible.
- 3) Temporary Water Service Program: a program that includes the installation of Temporary Water Service Lines providing temporary water supplies to Customers who are without water due to frozen Water Pipes.
- 4) Temporary Water Access Program: a program to provide eligible Customers with access, for domestic use, to temporary water supplies, other than by means of Temporary Water Service.
- 5) Special Assistance Program: a program that may be available in special circumstances to Vulnerable Customers and Critical Customers.

These programs are more fully described below.

DEFINITIONS

Critical Customer: any Customer requiring water for direct product inputs or core operational processes which may be affected if changes in quantity are experienced. Critical Customers include the following service areas:

- Food handling and processing facilities
- Arenas, stadiums and other large venues
- Colleges and universities
- Correctional facilities
- High volume industrial Customers
- Hotels
- Ice production facilities.

Customer: any person who has an active water and/or wastewater customer account, in good standing, with the City through Guelph Hydro Electric Systems Inc.

Non-potable: usable for non-consumptive uses (for example, water which can be used for toilet flushing, but not for drinking or cooking).

Potable: usable for all consumptive uses (for example, water which can be used for drinking or cooking).

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 with an active water supply who provides 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: any Customer with a water-dependent medical condition or similar vulnerability; Vulnerable Customers include:

- Elderly residents
- Health care facilities such as hospitals, clinics, dialysis centres and other medical facilities
- Nursing homes
- Pregnant customers or those with infants
- Schools and day care centres
- Veterinary clinics.

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

Water Services: the City's Water Services Department, including all applicable directors, officers, employees and contractors.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Water Services will:

- Respond to Customer frozen Water Pipe issues in accordance with this Policy and provide timely service and communication to Customers.

Each applicable Customer will:

- Comply with this Policy.
- Ensure that the Customer's own Water Pipes meet the Building Code standards in place to prevent freezing.
- Take proactive actions to maintain the Customer's own Water Pipes to prevent freezing.

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- Maintain adequate heat to the Customer's own Water Pipes to reduce the threat of internal freezing.
 - Pay all home-based energy costs incurred when the Customer applies heat to exposed Water Pipes on the Customer's property to cure or prevent Water Pipe freezing, whether instructed to do so by Water Services or voluntarily doing so.
 - Permit safe access to the Customer's property by Water Services if the Customer has requested assistance in addressing frozen Water Pipes.
 - Follow the provisions of this Policy and any instructions provided by Water Services.
 - Operate and maintain the Water Pipes on the Customer's property.
 - Contribute to the costs of these programs as set out in this Policy.

Each applicable Temporary Water Service Donor will:

- Allow Water Services safe entry to the Donor's property to install Temporary Water Services.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

In frozen Water Pipe events, Water Services will provide the following special customer service functions:

1. Customer Service Desk

- Water Services will maintain an open customer service desk accessible by telephone, email and walk-in on Monday to Friday between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm.
- In emergency situations, Water Services may offer extended customer service centre hours with hours of operation posted on the City's Frozen Water Pipe Policy webpage.

2. After Hours On-call Operator Support

- Customers impacted by frozen Water Pipes from 4:00 pm to 8:00 am may contact the Water Pipe On-call Operator at 1-888-630-9242.

3. Service Request Response Priorities

- Water Services will address Customer service requests on a "first come, first served" basis. Upon receipt of a service request regarding a frozen Water Pipe, Water Services will aim, wherever feasible, to initiate a response within twenty-four hours.
- Water Services may accelerate its response efforts to a service request from a Vulnerable Customer. Upon receipt of a service request from a Vulnerable

Customer regarding a frozen Water Pipe, Water Services will aim to initiate a response within twelve hours.

- Water Services will place recurring Customer service requests regarding frozen Water Pipes into the “first come, first served” queue for response.

4. **Communications**

- Water Services will provide specific updates and timely communications to Customers with frozen Water Pipes for the duration of the frozen Water Pipe event (for example, via e-mail or delivered hard copy letter).
- Water Services will provide general updates through appropriate media (for example, social media, City’s website, radio, and newspaper) as appropriate for the scale of the event and where capacity exists.

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

1. Freeze Prevention Program

The Freeze Prevention Program requires Customers to take specific actions to prevent the freezing of Water Pipes.

In the late fall of each year, Water Services will provide advance communication to Customers regarding this program, including Customer obligations.

FREEZE PREVENTION PROGRAM TRIGGERS

Water Services will activate the Freeze Prevention Program under either of the following conditions:

- If the cumulative mean daily temperature reaches -400°C following the first confirmed fall frost event, or
- If the treated water temperature reaches 4°C , as measured at City water towers and distribution system temperature monitoring locations.

Once a Freeze Prevention Program trigger has been reached, Water Services will communicate with Customers, particularly those Customers whose properties have historically experienced interruptions in water supply as a result of frozen Water Pipes, requesting them to take the actions set out in this program.

Once a Freeze Prevention Program trigger has been reached, each applicable Customer will:

- i. Ensure that the Customer has plumbing and drains that will accommodate continuous, unattended running of water.

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- ii. Begin running water at the Customer's property when instructed by Water Services in order to prevent Water Pipe freezing, as well as take meter readings and/or provide other information as requested to support administration of the Freeze Prevention Program.
 - iii. Notify Water Services at the earliest opportunity when an interruption in water supply occurs at the Customer's property.

2. Frozen Water Pipe Thawing Program

Under the Frozen Water Pipe Thawing Program, Water Services may, based on available technology, and where resources allow, attempt to thaw frozen Water Pipes which are readily accessible.

Water Services:

- i. Will receive each Customer request for thawing and assess whether thawing is feasible in the particular circumstances, and if so, provide the thawing service.
- ii. If conditions do not continue to support the safe use of existing thawing technology or if thawing stops being technically feasible, cease the thawing activities.
- iii. If notified by a Customer that the Customer has had a third party undertake thawing before Water Services was able to do so, may close the Customer's pending service request and/or determine what (if any) further field actions should be undertaken to address frozen Water Pipe issues at the Customer's property.

Each applicable Customer with frozen Water Pipes:

- i. Will ensure that the Customer's property is safe and accessible for Water Services to carry-out the thawing activity.
- ii. May, in accordance with the Program Costs set out in this Policy, initiate third party thawing of Water Pipes.
- iii. Will notify Water Services of any third party thawing of Water Pipes.

3. Temporary Water Service Program

The Temporary Water Service Program includes the installation of Temporary Water Service Lines providing temporary water supplies to Customers who are without water due to frozen Water Pipes.

Water Services will consider field conditions and technical constraints and may decide not to install a Temporary Water Service if field conditions or technical feasibility are unsatisfactory.

Out of concern for public health, Water Services does not condone or endorse the private installation of temporary water supplies. Any Customer who installs or operates a private temporary water supply does so at that Customer's own sole risk and expense.

Water Services will:

- i. If field conditions are appropriate and the installation is technically feasible, install a Temporary Water Service Line for a Customer with frozen Water Pipes, and provide the following at no cost to the Customer or the Temporary Water Service Donor:
 - o Materials, labour, Temporary Water Service Line installation, chlorine residual measurement, water quality sampling and meter readings;
 - o A Temporary Water Service Program information package; and
 - o If the Customer with the frozen Water Pipes receives a Temporary Water Service Line supplying Non-potable water, information regarding the Temporary Water Access Program.
- ii. Provide and install a hose bib backflow prevention device in any instance where a backflow prevention device was removed by the City to accommodate a Temporary Water Service Line installation.
- iii. At the end of the frozen Water Pipe event, remove the Temporary Water Service Line and take water meter readings.

Customers receiving the Temporary Water Service will:

- i. Provide written authorization to Water Services to install a Temporary Water Service Line.
- ii. Identify and obtain approval from the Temporary Water Service Donor and the owners and/or occupants of all other properties (if any) impacted by the installation or routing of the Temporary Water Service Line and provide this information to Water Services in a timely fashion.
- iii. Prepare for Water Services' installation of a Temporary Water Service Line by:
 - o Providing clear walkways and clear access to exterior unfrozen and undamaged hose bibs for the installation;
 - o Turning off the internal water supply; and

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- Coordinating necessary plumbing modifications to support water servicing through a Temporary Water Service Line, including, but not limited to, removal of backflow prevention devices at outdoor hose bibs.
 - iv. Run water continuously to prevent freezing of the Temporary Water Service Line as instructed by Water Services.
 - v. Retain or de-install the Temporary Water Service Line as instructed by Water Services.

Temporary Water Service Donors providing water to a Customer will:

- i. Provide written authorization to Water Services to install a Temporary Water Service Line.
- ii. Prepare for Water Services' installation of a Temporary Water Service Line by:
 - Providing clear walkways and clear access to exterior unfrozen and undamaged hose bibs for the installation;
 - Turning on the internal water supply to external hose bibs upon instruction by Water Services; and
 - Coordinating necessary plumbing modifications to support water servicing through a Temporary Water Service Line, where appropriate.
- iii. Continue to maintain active supply of water to the Temporary Water Service Line as instructed by Water Services to prevent freezing.

4. Temporary Water Access Program

The Temporary Water Access Program provides eligible Customers with access, for domestic use, to temporary water supplies other than by means of Temporary Water Service.

To be eligible for this program, the Customer must have:

- A water servicing issue that cannot be verified by Water Services as limited to the Customer's own Water Pipes,
- A frozen Water Pipe, and
- No Temporary Water Service supplying Potable water.

Water Services will:

- i. After initial notification by a Customer of a frozen Water Pipe, and if the Customer is eligible under this program, register the Customer under this program.

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- ii. Provide each eligible Customer with an overview package that outlines resources available under this program and includes the first water voucher and instructions on how to access resources (for example, future water vouchers, shower facilities, filling stations and laundry). Water Services will provide the overview package by e-mail for each Customer with e-mail access, and make it available for pick-up at Water Services by each Customer without e-mail access.

Each eligible Customer will:

- i. Notify Water Services at the earliest opportunity when an interruption in water supply occurs at the Customer's property.
- ii. Provide notice to Water Services within 48 hours after normal water supply has been restored to the Customer's property. Upon such notice, Water Services will terminate that Customer's access to the resources under this program.

Various resources are available to Customers eligible for this program. Instructions on how, when and where to access these resources are included in the overview package. The resources include:

Fill stations (for Non-potable water only) –available at designated facilities during designated time periods.

Grocery Store Vouchers for Potable water purchase – provided by e-mail or in-person.

- Water Services will provide only the initial water voucher with the overview package, and will provide subsequent vouchers only upon Customer request.
- The conditions of voucher distribution are as follows:
 - They can only be used for the purchase of Potable water,
 - They can be provided on a weekly basis, upon Customer request,
 - They cannot be issued retroactively,
 - They will not surpass a weekly maximum value of \$50 per household, and
 - They will expire on the next April 30th.

Laundry Facilities for household washing

- Upon Customer request, Water Services will provide access to laundry facilities for household washing.

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- Laundry services will be limited to six (6) laundry loads per week per household.

Shower Facilities – will be available at Customer request at the City’s community centres.

- Water Services will sponsor showering facilities only to a maximum of one (1) shower per person per day.

Water Services will:

- i. Make the resources available to eligible Customers only as set out above and in the overview package.

Each applicable Customer will:

- i. Obtain and transport suitable, personal use water containers for filling at City Fill Stations.
- ii. Obtain the Customer’s own transportation to and from all locations where the resources under this program are available.

5. Special Assistance Program

The Plant Manager of Water Services may, in special circumstances, approve the use of additional resources, beyond those available in the foregoing programs, for Vulnerable Customers and Critical Customers. Any such special assistance will be consistent with provisions of the City’s Procurement By-law and in consultation with the City’s Community Emergency Management Coordinator, the Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health Unit, and Wellington County Social Services.

PROGRAM COSTS

Customers who participate in the frozen Water Pipe programs will share in the costs as set out below.

If a Customer is not eligible under any program under this Policy, yet submits service requests for assistance with frozen Water Pipes on the Customer’s property or for access to the resources of any program under this Policy, then Water Services will seek full cost recovery from such Customer.

If a Customer has chosen not to participate in the programs under this Policy or to follow the direction of Water Services, Water Services will bill to that Customer any recurring service request calls, at call-out rates set out in the City’s Water and Wastewater Rate By-law.

The costs of Water Services are based on actual labour costs, payroll burden costs, overhead and administration costs, vehicle, equipment, materials and all property restoration costs.

1. Freeze Prevention Program

A Customer instructed by Water Services to run water is responsible for the payment of water and wastewater basic charges and the payment of volumetric charges, as defined in the City's Water and Wastewater Rate By-law, but based on the Customer's average historical account consumption for similar annual periods.

A Customer who runs water to prevent freezing, without the direct instruction of Water Services, will be responsible for the full payment of water and wastewater basic charges and volumetric charges, as defined in the City's Water and Wastewater Rate By-law.

2. Frozen Water Pipe Thawing Program

If Water Services thaws a frozen Customer Water Pipe that had been supplied with water by a City Water Pipe that froze, then Water Services will pay the costs of the thawing. If Water Services thaws a frozen Customer Water Pipe that had been supplied with water by a City Water Pipe that did not freeze, then the Customer will pay the costs of the thawing.

If a Customer wishes a more immediate thawing of only the Customer's Water Pipes, than Water Services can provide, then the Customer may retain a third party to thaw the Customer's Water Pipes at the Customer's own cost.

If a Customer wishes a more immediate thawing of both the Customer's Water Pipes and the City's Water Pipes supplying them, than Water Services can provide, then the Customer may retain a third party to thaw the Customer's Water Pipes and the City's Water Pipes, with the costs shared equally between Water Services and the Customer, as long as:

- The Customer provides, in advance, the particulars of the proposed thawing;
- Water Services approves the particulars of the proposed thawing;
- The Customer proceeds with the thawing as proposed; and
- The Customer reports the outcome of the thawing to Water Services.

3. Temporary Water Service Program

Each Temporary Water Service Donor is responsible for the payment of water and wastewater basic charges and the payment of volumetric charges, as defined in the

City's Water and Wastewater Rate By-law, but based on the Donor's average historical account consumption for similar annual periods. In remuneration for extending water servicing to a neighbour, the Temporary Water Service Donor will receive a full volumetric credit for all water and wastewater used during the service period. This credit will be applied to the Donor's water and wastewater Customer accounts by May 30th of the year in which the frozen Water Pipe event ends.

4. Temporary Water Access Program

Use of the resources under the Temporary Water Access Program is, as long as such use is within the limitations set out in this Policy, free to qualifying Customers.