

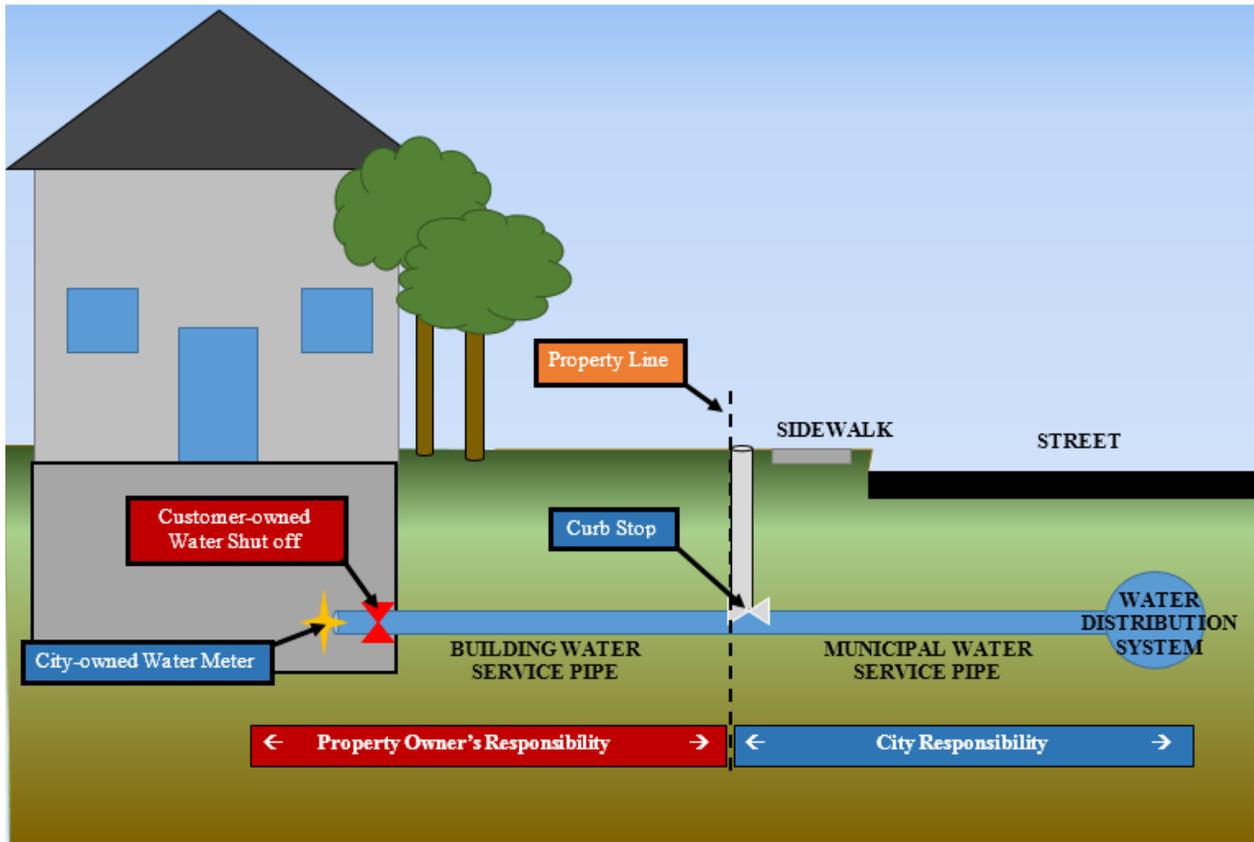
Frozen Water Services

HOTLINE 905-834-6627

Information for Property Owners



Whose responsibility is it?



Under the Ontario Building Code, all the water service pipes in your building, and the Building Water Service Pipe, which extends into your building, are defined as “plumbing”.

Legally, the City only has jurisdiction and responsibility for the “Water Distribution System”, which is defined under Ontario Regulation 170/03 – Drinking Water Systems, as including the watermains, appurtenances (i.e. fire hydrants, valves, sampling stations) and “service connections” (which we refer to in the Frozen Water Service Pipes Policy as the Municipal Water Service Pipe). Only the pipe from the watermain, up to and including the curb stop, is part of the Port Colborne Water Distribution System.

The water meter is the only item in your property owned by the City; however, under the Water By-law (3151/22/95) property owners are responsible for protecting the water meter from damage, including freezing.

How to Prevent Frozen Pipes

1. Protect Indoor Waterlines

Insulate indoor water lines in unheated areas, along exterior walls, in crawl spaces and garages. This will not necessarily prevent a frozen line, but will slow the process down and allow you to take measures to prevent a frozen water line.

2. Protect Vacant Property

If you are selling or maintaining vacant buildings, or leave your property vacant for an extended time period in the winter, leave heat on to prevent frozen water lines. If heat is turned off, winterize all water lines, the water meter and other fixtures. Ensure all lines are drained because they can still freeze. Consider calling the City and having water shut off at the curb stop (property line), for a modest fee.

3. Protect Outdoor Lines

Disconnect hoses from hose bibbs, and turn off inside the building. Disconnect irrigation systems, and winterize sprinkler systems by blowing water out of the sprinkler system with air (after ensuring the sprinkler system is NOT connected to interior plumbing)

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU

For Operational Inquiries:

Utilities Supervisor
905-835-5079

For Billing Inquiries:

Water Billing Clerk
905-835-2900 x125

On the Web:

http://portcolborne.ca/page/frozen_water_service

I have no water! What do I do?

Step one - Find the frozen pipe

- Try taps in different areas of the property - if one or more taps run, your issue is likely due to internal plumbing.
- Check your shut off (generally in basement or crawl space, before the water meter) to make sure it is completely open. Check the pipe coming into the building or the water meter to see if it appears white or frosted, or has a slight bulge or crack in it.
- If you have a crawl space, the frozen pipe may be in this area.
- If none of the taps work, the problem may be at the water meter, or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.

Step two - Thaw the pipe

- Move quickly - thaw frozen pipes as soon as possible.
- DO NOT USE A TORCH! Applying too much heat too fast can cause the ice to fracture and rupture the pipe, causing flooding.



I've ruled out frozen plumbing - Now what do I do?

Call the City's Frozen Service Hotline 905-834-6627

and provide:

- Your name
- Your address
- Contact # where we can reach you

Contact a plumber and schedule an appointment at your convenience.

The plumber will:

- Assess the situation and confirm the internal plumbing is not frozen
- Attempt to thaw the service line from inside the building

If the plumber is successful at thawing the line, the plumber will indicate if it is suspected the line was frozen on the Building Water Service Pipe (the "private" side - see diagram) or on the Municipal Water Service Pipe (the "City" side - see diagram).

If the freeze was in your plumbing or on the "private" side of the pipe, you will be billed directly by the plumber - and you will have your water restored!

If the plumber cannot thaw the line, and suspects the problem is on the City's side, the plumber will tell you to notify the City of their findings, but also state that the City has to verify the findings. Once you call the Frozen Service Hotline back, your property will be placed in the queue for the City to dig up the Municipal Water Service Pipe to attempt to thaw the line from outside.

I've left my tap running, who pays for the water? It depends...

Property owner pays full consumption charges if:

- Ran tap to prevent freezing
- Ran tap to prevent re-freezing after thawing frozen plumbing or frozen Building Water Service Pipe

City adjusts consumption charges to account for extra water usage if City:

- Notified owner to run tap to prevent Municipal Water Service Pipe from freezing
- Instructed owner to run tap after thawing to prevent re-freezing of Municipal Water Service Pipe

Note: There shall be no reimbursement of the fixed water/sewer charges in any instance.