

Frozen Water Service Line Public Notice

Due to many inquires this winter season, we are providing information about procedures to follow in times of continuous extreme cold weather. When the frost table is lower than in previous years it can result in frozen water service lines. This happened to many people in 2013-2014.

You can help prevent your line from freezing by letting the water run at a pencil size stream from a faucet. Letting the water run at this level will average .167 gpm (1/6 gallon per minute). You can measure this by filling a gallon milk jug in 6 minutes, which equals 7,500 gallons (10 units) in 30 days. If you have **not** been notified by the Virginia Department of Public Utilities to run your water, you will be responsible for the additional cost for sewer and water which is approximately \$75/month at the above flow rate.

Another indicator of an impending water service line freeze up is to check the temperature of your water after running it until it is cold. (Allow your water to run until it is cold and then check the temperature.) The water temperature should be around 42 degrees. If the temperature drops to 38 degrees or below, you may have an impending freeze up and the frost may be getting close to your service line. You should consider running water as stated in the previous paragraph. The cost for thawing frozen water services starts around \$400.00, which is considerably more expensive than running water. The risk of frozen service lines could continue for several weeks and/or months.

Other ways to reduce the risk of frozen water pipes inside your home:

Make frequent use of your water supply:

Water often breaks up ice before freezing. When outside temperatures remain below freezing, it's less expensive to run your faucet regularly than for you to repair a frozen or burst pipe.

Eliminate cold drafts near water pipes:

Tightly close doors and windows to the outside. Install storm windows on basement windows. Eliminate drafts from a crawl space. Fill in cracks in walls and around windows. Turn off water connections to the garden hose, at an inside valve, and drain the exposed piping before freezing temperatures set in.

Provide warmth to the water pipes:

Open the door to the room where the pipes are located to allow warmth to circulate. Place a lighted bulb near water pipes. Never use open flames. Wrap pipes in insulation or heat tape. If your kitchen or bathroom sink is located against an outside wall, insulate the wall. Open the cabinet door below the sink to allow warm air to reach the pipe.

How To Thaw Frozen Internal Water Pipes

The pipes are frozen if no water comes from your faucets when you turn them on. Most likely the pipes nearest a wall, door, window, or along the floor are frozen.

1. Start by opening a faucet near the frozen pipe to release any vapor from the melting ice and to let you know when the water starts flowing again.
2. Begin warming the pipes nearest the faucet and work toward the frozen section.
3. Blow warm air on the pipe using a hair dryer. Do not leave the dryer unattended or allow it to overheat.
4. Do not use a blowtorch or open flame to warm pipes; This is a fire hazard and could cause an explosion.
5. Once water has begun to flow again, let a pencil-sized stream of water flow through the faucet until normal heating is restored to the area.
6. Eliminate cold drafts and allow warm air to circulate around the pipes to prevent freezing again.