

COLD WEATHER HINTS AND TIPS REGARDING YOUR WATER
from the
WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT

WINTER WEATHER AND WATER MAIN BREAKS

There is approximately a 200 mile network of pipes, pumping stations and storage tanks that delivers water to our customers. The majority of the water pipes that were installed are over 50 years old and are constructed using cast iron pipes. Cast iron is a material that is relatively brittle and sensitive to external pressure placed on the pipe. Today we use ductile iron pipes that are lined with cement mortar and are not as brittle. Even a 10 degree change in the air temperature can increase stress on a pipe. Water temperatures below 40 degrees F can also cause pipes to become more brittle particularly if they have been subject to corrosion over time. Air temperature at or below freezing causes the ground above a pipe to freeze, therefore increasing the external stress on a pipe. Since the drop in water temperature lags behind air temperature changes, water main breaks usually occur one or two days after a severe cold snap.

Corrosion, inside and outside of a pipe decreases the thickness of the wall of the pipe and increases the chance of a break. Pipe diameter also is a factor in water main breaks. The smaller the diameter, the greater the risk of a water main break. Pipe age is the single largest factor, the break rate increases significantly after 60 years as a general rule.

If someone sees water along the road when it hasn't rained or sees water flowing in areas where no water should normally be, do not hesitate to call us at 343-8085 during business hours and at 347-2541 for after hours. Our crews will investigate the situation and respond accordingly.

If a water main break does occur our crews will respond quickly to assess if the break is a municipal responsibility. Sometimes the water service to a residence or business is the source of the break. As a rule, the service from the curb stop or "shutoff valve" located at the edge of road "right of way" to the structure is the owners responsibility to repair.

As always our crews will work diligently until the water main break is repaired. As a precaution, during these severe cold snaps it is a good idea to store some water for home use, should a water main break occur or due to any other severe weather condition that may disrupt service in your area. Thank you in advance for your cooperation during these cold weather months.



WATER MAIN BREAK MAIN STREET AND WASHINGTON STREET

FIRE HYDRANT USE IN COLD WEATHER – KEEP THEM CLEAR FROM SNOW

Fire protection is a critical piece of our work here at the Water and Sewer Department. As a precaution to the cold weather snaps that are prevalent in our region, the Middletown Water and Sewer Department has developed a fire hydrant winterizing program. Each fire hydrant is winterized so that it will not freeze in extreme cold weather. Our trained crews drain and inspect each hydrant so that it will not be subject to freezing. As a result, fire hydrants will work when the hydrant need to be utilized by firefighters.

It is very important that these fire hydrants are kept clear from snow and ice during these winter months. Please keep the hydrants near your home free from snow accumulation. This helps firefighters locate them quickly and provides access to immediate use. Please work with your neighbors to “adopt a hydrant” and make sure it is properly cared for during the winter months.

The firefighters from the Middletown Fire Department, Westfield and South District all send out crews to remove snow from hydrants as well. If you see a hydrant that is buried in snow please call the appropriate fire house at the following numbers: Main Street Fire 343-8004; Westfield Fire House 632-2690; South District Fire House 347-6661.

While fighting a fire every moment counts. Help save precious time, property and possibly even a life. Adopt a hydrant this winter in your neighborhood.



WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT OFFERS COLD WEATHER TIPS TO
PREVENT FREEZING PIPES
from the WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT

“During the cold winter weather, water pipes need special attention and care to keep them from freezing and bursting so homeowners should take reasonable precautions to help protect their home or businesses from damage”, said Guy Russo, Director of the Water and Sewer Department. Here are some basic cold weather hints and tips that home owners can follow that are inexpensive and could save you time and money in the long run.

- Know what areas of your home, such as basements, crawl spaces, unheated rooms and outside rooms, are most vulnerable to freezing.

- Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines by repairing broken windows, insulating walls, closing off crawl spaces and eliminating drafts near doors

- Know where your main water shut-off valve is. If a pipe freezes or bursts shut the water off immediately

- Don't attempt to thaw pipes unless the water is shut off. Freezing can cause unseen cracks in pipes or the soldering joints.

- Apply heat to the frozen pipe by warming the air around it, or by applying heat directly to the pipe. You can use a hair dryer, space heater, or hot water. Never use an open flame.

- Once the pipes have thawed, turn the water back on slowly and check for cracks and leaks and listen for a hissing sound.

- If the temperatures fall below zero and if you have pipes that are vulnerable to freezing, allow a small trickle of water to run overnight to keep the pipes from freezing. The cost of the extra water is minute compared to the cost to repair a broken pipe. This advice is controversial as some recommend that this should not be done because water is too valuable a resource to let run down the drain and it could be considered wasteful. You be the judge.

- Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses and shut off valves to outside water spigots.

If you have any questions call us at 343-8085. As always, we are at your service.