



Town of Erin Water Department

Frozen Water Service Policy

Effective date December 1, 2015

Approved by Joe Babin – Interim Water Superintendent
Approved by Town of Erin Council
Resolution 15-462

POLICY PURPOSE AND GOALS

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

Core goals of this policy include:

- 1) To implement proactive first priority measures to prevent freezing of Water Services.
- 2) To provide Customers who have Frozen Water Services with timely access to continuous, reliable, safe, potable water.
- 3) To maintain compliance with utility regulations and health guidelines, while best managing the Town's water resources during responses to Frozen Water Service events.

POLICY DESCRIPTION

This Frozen Water Service 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 Services.
- 2) Frozen Water Service Thawing Program: a program whereby The Town of Erin Water Department may, based on available technology, and where resources allow, attempt to thaw Frozen Water Services 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 Services.
- 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 a Temporary Water Service.

These programs are more fully described below.

DEFINITIONS

Customer: any person who has an active water account with the Town of Erin Water Department.

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

Potable water: 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 Service.

Temporary Water Service Donor: a Customer with an active water supply who provides a Temporary Water Service to a neighbor through a Temporary Water Service Line connected to the donating Customer's own Water Service.

Temporary Water Service Line: a Water Pipe used to provide a Temporary Water Service.

Water Service: any service pipe which supply's water from the water main to the Customer.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Town of Erin Water Department will:

- Respond to Customer Frozen Water Service 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/Water Service to prevent freezing.
- 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/Service freezing, whether instructed to do so by The Town of Erin Water Department or voluntarily doing so.
- Permit safe access to the Customer's property by The Town of Erin Water Department if the Customer has requested assistance in addressing Frozen Water Services.
- Follow the provisions of this Policy and any instructions provided by The Town of Erin Water Department.
- 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 The Town of Erin Water Department safe entry to the Donor's property to install Temporary Water Services.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

In Frozen Water Service events, The Town of Erin Water Department will provide the following customer service functions:

1) Customer Service Desk

- The Town of Erin Water Department will maintain an open customer service desk accessible by telephone, email and walk-in on Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 4:30pm.

2) After Hours On-Call Operator Support

- Customers impacted by Frozen Water Services from 4:30pm to 8:30am may contact the Town of Erin Water Department On-Call Operator at 519-830-8600.

3) Service Request Response Priorities

- The Town of Erin Water Department will address Customer Service requests on a “first come, first served” basis. Upon receipt of a service request, The Town of Erin Water Department will aim to initiate a response within twenty-four hours.
- The Town of Erin Water Department will place recurring Customer service requests regarding Frozen Water Services into the “first come, first served” queue for response.

4) Communications

- The Town of Erin Water Department will provide specific updates and timely communications to Customers with Frozen Water Services for the duration of the Frozen Water Service event (for example, via email or delivered hard copy letter).
- The Town of Erin Water Department will provide general updates through appropriate media (for example, social media, and Town’s website).

SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

1) Freeze Prevention Program

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

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

FREEZE PREVENTION PROGRAM TRIGGER

The Town of Erin Water Department will activate the Freeze Prevention Program if the treated water temperature reaches 4°C, as measured at The Town of Erin Water Tower and Distribution System temperature monitoring locations.

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

Once the Freeze Prevention Program Trigger has been reached, each applicable Customer will:

- Ensure that the property has plumbing, drains and a nearby catch basin that will accommodate continuous, unattended running of water.

- ii. Begin running water to waste at the property when instructed by The Town of Erin Water Department in order to prevent Water Service Freezing.
- iii. Notify Water Services at the earliest opportunity when an interruption in water supply occurs at the property.

2) Frozen Water Service Thawing Program

Under the Frozen Water Service Thawing Program, The Town of Erin Water Department may, based on available technology, and where resources allow, attempt to thaw Frozen Water Services which are readily accessible.

Town of Erin Water Department:

- i. Will receive each Customer request for thawing and assess whether thawing is feasible in 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 after two hours, cease the thawing activities.
- iii. If notified by a Customer that the Customer has had a third party undertake thawing before The Town of Erin Water Department 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 Service issues at the Customer's property.

Each applicable Customer with Frozen Water Services:

- i. Will ensure that the Customer's property is safe and accessible for The Town of Erin Water Department to carry-out the thawing activity.
- ii. May initiate third party thawing of Water Services but must notify The Town of Erin Water Department in advance.

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 a Frozen Water Service.

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, The Town of Erin Water Department 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 the Customer's own sole risk and expense.

The Town of Erin Water Department will:

- i. If field conditions are appropriate and the installation is technically feasible, install a Temporary Water Service Line for a Customer with a Frozen Water Service at no cost to the Customer or the Temporary Water Service Donor.
- ii. Provide and install a hose bib backflow prevention device in any instance where a backflow prevention device was removed by The Town of Erin Water Department to accommodate a Temporary Water Service Line Installation.
- iii. At the end of the Frozen Water Service event, remove the Temporary Water Service Line and take water meter readings.

Customers receiving the Temporary Water Service will:

- i. Provide written authorization to The Town of Erin Water Department to install a Temporary Water Service Line.
- ii. Obtain approval from a Temporary Water Service Donor and provide this information to The Town of Erin Water Department.
- iii. Prepare for The Town of Erin Water Department's installation of a Temporary Water Service Line by:
 - Providing clear walkways and clear access to exterior unfrozen and undamaged hose bibs for the installation.
 - If site conditions are met, run water continuously to waste to prevent freezing of the Temporary Water Service Line as instructed by The Town of Erin Water Department.

Temporary Water Service Donors providing water to a Customer will:

- i. Provide written authorization to The Town of Erin Water Department to install a Temporary Water Service Line.
- ii. Continue to maintain active supply of water to the Temporary Water Service Line as instructed by The Town of Erin Water Department 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 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 The Town of Erin Water Department as limited to the Customer's own Water Pipes,
- A Frozen Water Service, and
- No Temporary Water Service supplying Potable water.

The Town of Erin Water Department will:

- i. After initial notification by a Customer of a Frozen Water Service, and if the Customer is eligible under this program, register the Customer under this program.
- ii. Provide each eligible Customer with instructions on how to access resources (for example, shower facilities, filling stations).

Each eligible Customer will:

- i. Notify The Town of Erin Water Department at the earliest opportunity when an interruption in water supply occurs at the Customer's property.
- ii. Provide notice to The Town of Erin Water Department within 48 hours after normal water supply has been restored to the Customer's property. Upon such notice, The Town of Erin Water Department 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 will be provided.

The resources include:

- Fill Stations - available at designated facilities during designated time periods.
- Showers Facilities – will be available at Customer request at the Town of Erin community centres.

Water Services will:

- i. Make the resource available to eligible Customers only as set out above.

Each applicable Customer will:

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

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

The Town of Erin Water Department may, in special circumstances, approve the use of additional resources, beyond those available in the foregoing programs for vulnerable customers.

PROGRAM COSTS

Customers who participate in the Frozen Water Service programs will share in the costs as set out below.

If a Customer has chosen not to participate in the programs under this policy or to follow the direction of The Town of Erin Water Department, The Town of Erin Water Department will bill to that Customer any recurring service request calls, at call-out rates set out in the Town's Water Rate By-Law.

The costs of The Town of Erin Water Department are based on actual labor costs, payroll burden costs, overhead and administration costs, vehicle, equipment, materials and all property restoration costs.

1. Freeze Prevention Program

A Customer instructed by The Town of Erin Water Department to run water to waste is responsible for the payment of water monthly basic charges and the flat rate fee, as defined in the Town's Water Rate By-Law.

A Customer who runs water to prevent freezing, without the direct instruction of The Town of Erin Water Department, will be responsible for the full payment of water monthly basic charges and consumption charges, as defined in The Town's Water Rate By-Law.

2. Frozen Water Service Thawing Program

If The Town of Erin Water Department thaws a Frozen Water Service that was caused by the freezing of the Town's portion of the Water Service Line or the Water main, the Town of Erin Water Department will pay the costs of the thawing. If The Town of Erin Water Department thaws a Frozen Water Service that was only frozen on The Customer's portion of the Water Service Line, then the Customer will pay the costs of the thawing, as defined in the Town's Water Rate By-Law.

If a Customer wishes a more immediate thawing of only the Customer's portion of the Frozen Water Service, than The Town of Erin Water Department can provide, then the Customer may retain a third party to thaw the Frozen Water Service at the Customer's own cost.

If a Customer wishes a more immediate thawing of both the Customer's portion and the Town's portion of the Frozen Water Service, than The Town of Erin Water Department can provide, then the Customer may retain a third party to thaw the Frozen Water Service, with the costs shared equally between The Town of Erin Water Department and the Customer, as long as:

- The Customer provides, in advance, the particulars of the proposed thawing;
- The Town of Erin Water Department 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 The Town of Erin Water Department.

3. Temporary Water Service Program

Each Temporary Water Service Recipient and Donor is responsible for the payment of water monthly basic charges and the flat rate fee, as defined in The Town's Water Rate By-Law. The Donor will not be charged for the extra water consumption being used by the neighbor.

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.