

# FAQ

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## Water Lines at Risk – Common Questions

*The City has compiled this list of common questions. If you have additional questions or concerns, please see the contact information at the end of page two.*

### **Are water lines still at risk of freezing?**

- Yes, the frost is still in the ground and the City is still responding to emergency calls, so it is important to continue to protect your home or business water lines

### **What is the best way to prevent my water line from freezing?**

- The more efficient and economical way is to run a tap just a pencil width continuously
- The City has responded to homes where people stopped running a tap overnight, or forgot to turn the tap on for the day, and the water lines have frozen as a result
- There are other tips such as opening cabinet doors so pipes receive heat, using heat tape and making sure basements are heated. These can be found at [medicinehat.ca/eu](http://medicinehat.ca/eu)

### **What does ‘running the tap continuously’ mean?**

- Continuously means running the tap 24 hours per day
- Customers who have turned their taps off for a few hours, or overnight – have ended up with frozen lines

### **What if the City has to come to my house more than once because my water lines have frozen again?**

- The City may assess a fee to any homes they have to respond to more than once, depending on the situation. Each situation is assessed by our staff.

### **I am worried – should I start to run my taps now?**

- Yes! The risk is not over. It is better to take steps now than taking the chance that your water line may freeze.

### **What if water lines break inside my home?**

- Homeowners are responsible for the cost of water lines that freeze inside a home, and any related damage. The City assesses each situation by attending to discover the location of the problem

## **Is this really the worst issue with freezing pipes the city has experienced? What are the numbers?**

- Yes, this is an unprecedented situation. In a typical winter, the City may respond to 30-40 emergency calls about frozen water lines. This winter, we have responded to over 300 calls, which is 10 times more.

## **How long does it take to restore water once pipes are frozen?**

- We can't give a specific time estimate. Once a call is received, staff attend to assess the situation. Then equipment must be sent to begin the thawing process.
- Because of the backlog due to the high volume of frozen water lines, it may take several days to restore water

## **Are older homes more at risk?**

- More emergency calls are coming in from older homes in older neighbourhoods, but there is no guarantee which homes will be affected. It is best to be proactive.

## **What do I do without water?**

- We realize it is a shock to suddenly have no water. That is why we have been encouraging people to run taps and take other measures.
- As water is essential to health, the City is providing 20 L water jugs to residents without water services.
- Environmental Utilities will provide information to residents who are without water
- It is better to not end up in the situation – take the proactive step of running a tap to prevent the water line from freezing.

## **When will our pipes be safe from freezing?**

- We will continue to assess the situation
- Just because the weather is warming up and the snow is melting does not mean water lines are not at risk – it is the frost in the ground that is causing pipes to freeze

## **Will the City let us know when this is no longer an issue?**

- Yes, once we are confident that there is no further risk, we will advise residents and business owners

*Thank you for your patience and cooperation! Residents who choose to run their taps or take other proactive measures to relieve the burden to the City as we respond to emergency calls.*

## **For more information:**

Environmental Utilities: 403.529.8176

Tips and details: <http://medicinehat.ca/eu>