

**CITY OF RUTLAND
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

FROZEN PIPE POLICY

7.5) FROZEN WATER LINES

- A. Each person served by the water system shall take reasonable precautions to prevent his or her water service from freezing.
- B. If the service pipe freezes, the property owner may call the Department of Public Works (DPW) to thaw the pipe.
 1. During regular business hours: If it is determined that the blockage is in the portion of the water piping that is the responsibility of the property owner, the property owner will be billed a flat fee of \$75.00. If it is discovered that the blockage is in the portion of the pipe that is the responsibility of the City, this charge will be waived.
 2. Outside of regular business hours: If a property owner requests that the DPW thaw a frozen water pipe after normal business hours, the property owner will be billed for this service at DPW billing rates, including any appropriate overtime labor rates. If it is discovered that the blockage is in the portion of the pipe that is the responsibility of the City, this charge shall be waived.
- C. Thawing will be done on a first call-first served basis. However, the order of thawing may be changed when, in the judgment of the Commissioner, there is reason to do so.
- D. While the DPW will attempt to accommodate requests as described in this section, there are circumstances under which this service may not be provided, including but not limited to situations where:
 - There is no functioning shut off valve within the building. Modifications to the existing piping system are required before the DPW's thawing device can be used.
 - The existing piping is in such a condition or of such material that, in the judgment of the Commissioner, connecting and using the thawing equipment could result in damage to that piping.
 - Conditions in the area to be used for the thawing are such that, in the judgment of the Commissioner, they pose a safety or health hazard to the employee.
- E. The DPW will make reasonable efforts to accommodate all requests for thawing in a timely fashion. However, the timing of the work is subject to other thawing work previously requested and water system emergencies. The City shall not be held responsible for damages suffered due to delays in thawing the water pipe. Property owners may, at their own expense, contract with other individuals to thaw their frozen water services.

- F. If the Commissioner determines that the DPW cannot respond to a property owner's request for thawing in a reasonable amount of time, or determines that available DPW equipment is not suitable for a specific thawing operation, the Commissioner may authorize the property owner to contract with another party to thaw the pipe. Thawing using electric current is discouraged. The City will not be held responsible for any damages resulting from the pipe thawing attempts of the selected contractor or others. The property owner shall give notice to the DPW to allow the DPW the opportunity to have a DPW representative on site when a contractor thaws a water pipe.
- 1. If the pipe is thawed in such a manner as the location of the blockage can be determined, the representative and contractor shall agree upon the location. Costs of thawing shall be as follows:
 - A. If it is determined that the blockage is in the portion of the water piping that is the responsibility of the City, the City will reimburse the property owner for reasonable costs of thawing.
 - B. If it is determined that the blockage is in the portion of the water piping that is the responsibility of the property owner, the property owner will be responsible for the thawing costs.
- 2. If the location of the blockage cannot be determined, the City will reimburse the property owner for 50% of reasonable thawing costs.
- 3. If the DPW is not notified prior to the thawing operation, the property owner will be responsible for the thawing costs.
- G. Waiver of charges, cost and reimbursements by the City as described in this section shall be limited to one per winter and shall not apply to those persons who have been advised to take the precautions described in section 7.6, or to those properties listed as running water to prevent freezing.

7.6) PROTECTION FROM FREEZING

- A. When, in the opinion of the Commissioner, extended cold weather increases the risk of water main or service line freezing, he or she may authorize or request certain water users to let water run in order to minimize such risk. The Commissioner shall keep a list of such users. When so authorized, the water and sewer bill for that usage period will be adjusted to reflect the historic usage for that period for the accounts on the aforementioned list.
- B. Water users who have reason to believe that their service is in danger of freezing may apply to the Commissioner for authorization to let the water run as noted above.
- C. No adjustment of billing will be made for water left running to prevent freezing of any pipes other than the water service line. (e.g. interior plumbing).