



7490 Sideroad 7 W, PO Box 125,  
Kenilworth, ON N0G 2E0

[www.wellington-north.com](http://www.wellington-north.com)

519.848.3620

1.866.848.3620 FAX 519.848.3228

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## Frozen Water Services

There are 3 main reasons which contribute to freezing of a water service lateral – Frost Depth, Water Usage and Exposure to Weather.

**Frost Depth:** Normal maximum frost depths in our region can range from 4 – 6 feet in areas that have snow cleared. Roadways, parking lots and driveways are locations where the frost can be driven deep and unfortunately may also be the area where water services are located. As the frost level goes down it approaches and in extremely cold temperatures can reach to the depth of the buried water services. Think of frost as a block of ice in the ground which grows larger and larger from the ground surface downward. If this block of ice comes in contact with a water service it may cause the service to freeze.

**Water Usage:** This applies to both water mains and service laterals. Lower usage means the water is going to stay in the pipes longer. If water usage in the mains is low the water will get colder and colder. If water usage in a service lateral is low or stops (such as a resident going on vacation) the lateral may freeze solid.

**Exposure to Weather:** Your service line may be exposed to drafts or cold air where it enters your building (sometimes a cold room) or where piping runs along the interior side of exterior walls (sometimes inside cupboards). The municipal supply is exposed while being stored in elevated towers and reservoirs.

### Signs my water service may be starting to freeze:

1. Water may become discoloured
2. Water volume will decrease
3. Temperature will decrease to 2 degrees Celsius or less
4. Reduction in water pressure

### What can I do to prevent my water service from freezing?

1. If you notice any of the signs listed above, please call the Township of Wellington North at 519-848-3620 during regular business hours (7:30am-4:00pm), after hours 519-323-1710.
2. *Always ensure that internal plumbing is protected from drafts and cold temperatures.* If you have pipes on the interior side of exterior walls in cabinets leave the doors open to circulate warm air. Insulate pipes that are susceptible to freezing with foam covers which can be purchased at most hardware stores.
3. If you are leaving your building for an extended period of time turn off your water at the main valve (generally located where the water line enters your house). Once this is done open your taps to drain water from your plumbing lines. Try to ensure the lowest tap in your building is always drained.
4. If you think your service is close to freezing open numerous taps in your home and run until full volume and pressure returns. Once full pressure returns do not shut off all your taps but leave one trickling (size of a pencil or 1/4") preferably in a laundry sink if available and clear of obstructions and then notify the Township Water & Wastewater Department (519-848-3620).

### If my service freezes what should I do?

1. If you suspect that you may have a frozen service please check all taps inside to **confirm that you have no water throughout your building**. If you have water at some taps and not others this would indicate that your water line from the street to your premises is not frozen however a water line within your building is. If this is the case please ensure that you have adequate heat in the area or room which the frozen water line is located. You may want to try using a hair dryer or heat pad on the pipe that may be exposed or possibly frozen. Do not use a torch which may cause fire. You may wish to contact a plumber for further assistance.
2. If you have confirmed your water service is frozen throughout your building contact the Township of Wellington North Water Department during regular business hours (7:30am- 4pm) at 519-848-3620. After hours please contact on call number at 519-323-1710. A licensed Township operator will review with you what actions will be required. Please note that given the time of your freeze up and availability of staff it may be the next business day before staff fully restore your water supply.
3. Contact a neighbor to arrange for the possibility that licensed Township staff operator(s) may have to hook your house to theirs via outside hose bibs connections.

### What if my service has frozen in the past?

If your service has frozen in the past you will be notified by the Township Water & Wastewater Services as to when you should start to take precautions (leaving a small tap running). If you fail to hear from us please contact us at 519-848-3620.