City of Erin Water Department Information to Customers

Because of individual leaks within our customers personal or commercial properties and customers that ran water from the faucets to prevent freezing during the recent Arctic Storm weather event the last week of December, the City of Erin experienced an overwhelming demand for water usage from its customers. With that said, we will remind our customers that they are only charged for the water amount that goes through their meter. Customers are charged by the gallon regardless of the number of days in the billing cycle. The billing cycle is the middle of the month to the middle of the next month and then customer is billed on the 1st.

Below are some tips during winter weather:

Be a good neighbor

Check on your neighbors and relatives. There are elderly and shut ins within our community that cannot physically do the small things.

City of Erin Water Department responsibility stops at the meter

All customers are responsible for all lines from the meter to the structure on individual properties, all lines inside the structure and all outside hydrants. The City of Erin does have Radio Read meters. BUT a leak has to run for a constant 24-hour period before it will register as a leak. This is the reason it is so important for the customer to check their own property for problems.

Protect the pipes.

Protect against frozen pipes by insulating those that could be susceptible to freezing. When the temperature drops below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, keep a stream of water dripping in the faucet to guard against freezing and bursting. To protect plumbing under kitchen and bathroom sinks, consider opening the cabinet doors so warm air can surround the pipes.

Install an emergency release.

Consider installing an emergency pressure release valve in your plumbing system. This will protect against increased pressure caused by freezing pipes and can prevent them from bursting. It's also a good idea to learn how to shut the water off and know where your pipes are located.

House the hose.

Remove all garden hoses that are attached to the house, drain them and store them away. Shut off the valves and insulate the faucet. If you're heading away for the winter, you need to take extra precautions. Turn the water completely off and consider having the plumbing system drained to keep pipes from freezing. Also, have a friend or neighbor check on your home regularly to look for any issues. If a problem is detected, act quickly to minimize potential damage to your property.

FAQs:

- **Which do I run, hot or cold water?** Run the cold-water faucet.
- **How much water do I run?** You need just a trickle of water to drip so that water is moving through the pipes consistently.
- **Isn't it expensive to let the faucet drip?** *At the rate the water is dripping, it will fill a gallon pitcher in about an hour*. At current rates, this will cost about 8 cents per 12-hour period to drip one faucet. Much cheaper than broken pipes and water damage!
- **How long do I run the water?** Let the faucet drip until temperatures are consistently above freezing to be on the safe side.
- **Which faucet/s should I drip?** If you know the farthest faucet from your water meter, you can run only that faucet and it will draw water all the way through the house.
- **Can't I just open the cabinet doors?** Opening the cabinets to allow warm air into those enclosed spaces can help and is recommended. Typically, this is effective in the kitchen and bathrooms. That said, most pipe problems happen in less accessible places.

Uninsulated pipes in uninsulated spaces, especially garages, crawl spaces, and attics, are more likely to have problems with pipes freezing. That is why *insulating exposed plumbing* is so important. Keeping pipes from freezing is not an exact science. There are steps you can and should take, but every house is unique. The measures you take depend on your particular house and its vulnerabilities, including where you choose to drip water, how well-insulated it is, etc. It also depends on the weather: how long temperatures stay below freezing and just how cold those temperatures get have an impact. You can't always prevent pipes from freezing, even if you do everything in your power to keep it from happening. But taking basic precautions, such as dripping a water faucet, is worth the extra time, effort, and amount of money spent on the water bill.