

Frozen Water Services

City of Saint Peter Water Utility

There are steps you can take as a property owner to minimize the impact and prevent your service line from freezing.

First – if your service has a history of freezing please monitor the water temperature. Water coming into your dwelling should be between 43 - 47 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter. Any temperature below that may indicate frost in the area of your service line.

Second – if your water temperature continues to approach 40 degrees you may want to let your water run in order to prevent it from freezing.

Why do service lines freeze?

Frost depth - is the depth to which the ground is frozen. Water services in Saint Peter are typically installed at a depth of over 7'. In most winter months frost doesn't get that deep, however, during severely cold and long winters; frost depth can reach the depth of your service. This usually occurs in February or early March. In early spring, it may seem warmer, but frost remains deep in the ground until regular overnight temperatures above freezing are reached.

If the ground surrounding the service lines becomes frozen, it will cool the already cold water in the pipes and they can freeze. When the water stops moving, the temperature can lower quite quickly and freeze the water. This is why it is important to keep the water running; it keeps warmer water moving through the frost zone. If the water temperature coming into your home goes below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, you may want to consider running your water.

If your service line or plumbing are susceptible to frost, let cold water run from one faucet throughout the day and night. The amount of running water should be a little more than a trickle (the thickness of a pencil). The City cannot credit you for the water that you run, but the associated utility charges could be less than the cost to repair or thaw your water service line. Even as the weather warms up, the frost table is pushed lower, so the risk of frozen service lines could continue for several weeks.

What to do if your pipes are frozen:

Call the Saint Peter Public Works Department at (507) 934-0670 (7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday) or Saint Peter Police Dispatch at 507-934-1550, after hours and weekends. City staff can provide information to you on what can be done to thaw your water service line.