

# **CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF OSCODA FROZEN WATER SERVICE LINE POLICY**

## **1. Purpose.**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the Charter Township of Oscoda's procedures in the event of frozen water service lines. The Township may provide a service of thawing frozen service lines to businesses or residences as time and resources allow in a safe and cost effective manner, keeping in mind budget, personnel, and environmental concerns.

## **2. Township Responsibilities.**

The Charter Township of Oscoda has identified, and will continue to identify, water lines serving water customers which are subject to freezing during the winter months, and the Township Utility Department will maintain a list of such customers. When extended cold weather increases the risk of water service line freezing, water customers which have been identified as having water lines susceptible to freezing will be notified that they should allow their water to run.

If authorized to do so by the Township Board, the water bills for that usage period will be adjusted to reflect the historic average calculated using the previous three (3) months, only for the water accounts on the aforementioned list.

## **3. Property Owner Responsibilities.**

In the Charter Township of Oscoda, water lines are the responsibility of the property owner from the water shut off (curb stop) to the building. The curb stop is also the responsibility of the property owner and it is their responsibility to maintain it in proper working order.

When directed by the Township to run their water, a property owner will run water from the cold water tap closest to the point where the service enters the building in a pencil-width stream (approximately 1 gallon every 4 minutes).

## **4. Frozen Water Line Procedures.**

The Township will respond to service calls in the order received. Calls received during working hours shall be responded to within that business day if staffing is available. Calls received after working hours or on weekends will be responded to during regular hours on the next business day.

The Township 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, water system operation requirements, and water system emergencies.

The Township will thaw external water service lines only, not frozen plumbing inside a business or residence.

When the Township responds to a frozen water service call, if it can be determined that the blockage is in the portion of the line that is the responsibility of the homeowner and not the Township (between the curb stop and the building), the property owner shall be responsible for hiring and paying a licensed plumber or other firm capable of safely thawing their service line. The property owner will assume all risks and liabilities of using a pipe thawing service.

If it is discovered that the blockage is in the portion of the service line that is the responsibility of the Township (between the curb stop and the water main), the Township shall thaw the line if resources allow on a first come, first serve basis.

If the Township does not have the resources to thaw a customer's water service at the time the service call is received, the Township shall not be held responsible for any damages suffered due to delays in thawing the water service. Property owners may, at their own expense, contract with other individuals to thaw their frozen water services. However, the property owner will then assume all risks and liabilities of using a pipe thawing service.

If water service freezing occurs and the line cannot be thawed within 24 hours, the Township will provide temporary water where possible by hooking up to a neighboring residence or business with the permission of that property owner.

The Township will use hot water or steam in its thawing operation if provided. The use of electric pipe thawing machines or welding machines is strictly prohibited, and persons or firms using same will be held liable for any damage caused to water services, curb stops or mains.

## 5. Exceptions.

While the Township will attempt to accommodate requests for thawing frozen service lines, 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, or modifications to the existing piping system are required before the Township's thawing device can be used.
- The existing piping is in such a condition or of such a material that, in the judgment of the Township staff, 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 Township staff, they pose a safety or health hazard.

The Township reserves the right to deviate from this policy at any time if deemed to be in the general public interest and the protection of the health, safety and welfare of the public.