

Meter Box Maintenance

Your water meter is in a water meter box typically located by your front property line. Knowing the location of your water meter is very important and lets your utility quickly access the water meter and shut-off valve in case of a leak or water emergency.



Shrubs, planters and other landscaping can obscure access to the water meter. You can help maintain access to the water meter box by:

- Keeping items off the meter box
- Trimming the grass around the meter box
- Keeping shrubbery and other landscaping from obstructing a clear and easy access to the meter box
- Shoveling plowed snow off of the meter box
- Keeping the meter box closed during cold weather to reduce the chances of freezing

Taking a Winter Vacation?

If you plan to be away from your home for an extended period of time during the winter:

- Call your utility to have your water service turned off
- Drain your system
- Turn off the water supply lines to your clothes washer
- Turn off your hot water tank
- Ensure all vent openings are closed off

Emergency Preparedness

Water is essential for survival. Be prepared for the unexpected and store enough water for up to three days for each person in your home.

- Use 6 two-liter soda pop bottles per person
- Label it “drinking water” and date it
- Store in a cool, dark place
- Change your water every six months

Visit Whatcom Unified Emergency Management’s webpage: www.whatcomready.org/preparedness or call 360-676-6681



For more information:
City of Bellingham Public Works
(360) 778-7700
askpw@cob.org

Preparing Your Water Service for Cold Weather



City of Bellingham Public Works Department



Cold Snap Checklist

1. Eliminate drafts: **close and insulate** vents with rigid foam; **caulk and seal** any openings near your water pipes.
2. **Insulate** pipes.
3. **Drain** outside pipes and faucets.
4. **Cover or insulate** exterior faucets.
5. **Disconnect** or winterize garden hose and irrigation systems, pools and spas according to manufacturer's recommendations.



PREVENT FROZEN PIPES

Let it drip: a slow trickle of cold water can prevent exposed or uninsulated pipes from freezing



If Your Pipes Freeze.....

- Never try to thaw a frozen pipe with a torch or open flame
- Place a warm towel or rag around the pipe or try a hair dryer on a low setting to thaw out the frozen pipe



If Your Pipes Break.....

- Call 778-7700 24/7 to have the water shut off at the meter



Cold Snap Water Use Trends

When a water utility experiences below freezing temperatures followed by warmer temperatures, water use doubles as a result of broken, frozen pipes thawing out.

The graph to the left reflects what happened to a water utility's water usage after a long cold snap in 2008. Water usage doubled and almost met the peak day for that year!



Water Usage Trends After a Cold Snap in 2008

