



BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

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Frozen Water Service Lines

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Latest Revision/Effective Date: February 24, 2026

Original Adoption Date: February 27, 2024

I. Purpose

This policy establishes consistent treatment of frozen water service lines for all customers and promotes fairness and transparency around the treatment of a frozen service line.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all residential and commercial utility accounts served by Brainerd Public Utilities.

III. Definitions

Water Main: The publicly owned water distribution pipe operated and maintained by BPU that delivers water service within the public right-of-way.

Service Line (Residential): The water pipe extending from the curb stop to a residential structure, which is the responsibility of the property owner.

Service Line (Commercial): The water pipe extending from the water main to a commercial structure, which is the responsibility of the property owner.

Curb Stop: The control valve typically located near the property line that allows water service to a premises to be turned on or off.

Frozen Water Main: A condition in which the publicly owned water main operated by BPU becomes obstructed due to freezing, impairing system-wide water delivery.

Frozen Service Line: A condition in which a privately owned water service line becomes obstructed due to freezing, impairing water delivery to an individual property.

Property Owner: The legal owner of record of residential or commercial real property receiving water service from BPU.

Licensed Plumber: A plumbing professional licensed in accordance with applicable state or local regulations and authorized to perform plumbing work.

Line Thawing Service: The process of safely restoring water flow in a frozen service line using approved equipment and methods.

Water Meter: The BPU-owned device installed at a property to measure water consumption.

Fee Schedule: The Commission-approved schedule of rates and charges applicable to services, repairs, equipment replacement, and related utility costs.

Emergency Shut-Off: Immediate termination of water service when necessary to prevent damage to property, infrastructure, or public safety.

Seasonal Average Consumption: The customer's historical average water usage during comparable seasonal periods, used for billing adjustments when water must be run to prevent freezing.

Preventative Measures: Actions taken by a customer to reduce the risk of frozen water lines, including but not limited to insulation, maintaining heat within structures, and running water as directed by BPU.

IV. Policy Statement

Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) is responsible for a frozen water main. Residential customers are responsible for waterlines from the curb stop to their residence. Commercial customers are responsible for waterlines from the main to their business.

Property owners (residential and commercial) are responsible for hiring and paying a licensed plumber, or other firm, capable of safely thawing their service lines. Property owners will assume all risks and liabilities of using a line thawing service.

If BPU is notified of a frozen water line, BPU staff will investigate the problem and determine if it's the main or service line. Notifications received during regular working hours shall be responded to within that business day. Notifications received after working hours will be responded to the following working day, unless deemed an emergency for shut off.

If the water meter is damaged due to the frozen water service, the customer will be billed per the fee schedule to replace the meter. BPU may require this payment before installing the meter.

Customers are responsible for taking all the necessary precautions to avoid frozen water lines. These precautions can be found at www.bpu.org. The costs associated with this preventative measure will be incurred by the customer. If BPU determines it is necessary for the customer to run their water to avoid a water main freeze up, the customer's water and wastewater charges will be adjusted to their average seasonal water consumption.

BPU reserves the right to deviate from this policy at any time if deemed to be in the best interest of BPU and its customers based on safety and economic considerations. Any deviation and the reason for the deviation shall be documented in writing.

V. Procedures

Upon notification of a suspected frozen water service, BPU Water Distribution staff will respond and determine the location of the freeze. Staff will assess whether the condition exists in the public water main or within the customer's service line. Once the location is confirmed, staff will notify the customer and identify the responsible party for corrective action. If the freeze is within the customer's service line, the property owner is responsible for hiring and paying a licensed plumber or qualified thawing contractor. If the freeze is within the public water main, BPU will coordinate and perform the necessary corrective measures. All costs shall be assigned to the responsible party as outlined in the Commission-approved policy statement.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities

Water Distribution crew and billing representative will be responsible for ensuring the policy is billed correctly.

VII. Compliance and References

None.

VIII. Associated Forms and Attachments

None.

IX. Review and Update Schedule

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Public Utilities Commission.

Revised: February 24, 2026.

X. Approval and Authority

The Brainerd Public Utilities Commission approved this policy on February 24, 2026.