



# BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

8027 Highland Scenic Rd • P.O. Box 373 • Brainerd, Minnesota 56401  
**Business Office:** 218.829.8726 ■ **Repair Service:** 218.829.2193  
www.bpu.org

## Leaking Residential Water Service Line Policy

BPU\_POL\_2025-01

Latest Revision/Effective Date: November 25, 2025

Original Adoption Date: November 25, 2025

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards for the identification, notification, repair, and enforcement related to leaking residential water service lines on customer-owned property.

### II. Scope

This policy applies to all residential properties served by the utility and governs all leaks occurring on the customer-owned portion of the water service line.

### III. Definitions

**Water Service Line:** The pipe connecting a property to the public water main, consisting of both utility-owned and customer-owned sections.

**Curb Stop/Curb Box:** The shutoff valve located at or near the property line separating utility-owned and customer-owned infrastructure.

**Minimal Leak:** A leak that does not create hazardous conditions, does not pose a risk to public health and safety, does not pose a risk to infrastructure, and does not result in significant or escalating water loss as determined by the utility.

**Customer:** The property owner or responsible account holder receiving water service.

**Licensed Contractor:** A plumber or utility contractor licensed and approved by the City to work on water service lines.

### IV. Policy Statement

Customers are responsible for the timely repair of residential water service lines that are under their ownership. The Utility recognizes that, upon notification of a leaking residential water service line, customers may encounter physical, logistical, and financial challenges that can affect the repair timeline. This policy establishes the Utility's notification process, defines ownership and responsibilities, outlines required repair timelines, identifies conditions under which extensions may be granted, and describes available financing and assessment options for the repair of leaking residential water service lines.

**V. Procedures**

**a. Lead Identification and Notification Requirements**

When a leak is discovered on the customer-owned portion of the service line, the utility will provide notification using one or more of the following methods:

- i. Written Letter mailed to the property owner.
- ii. Phone call to the account holder or property owner.
- iii. Text message to the phone number on file.
- iv. Door hangar placed at the service address.

**1. Contents of Notification**

Each Notification will include:

- Description and location of the suspected or confirmed leak.
- Explanation of ownership responsibility.
- Required customer actions.
- Deadlines for planning and completing repairs.
- Available financing and assessment options.
- Instructions for contacting the utility with questions.
- Statement of potential enforcement actions for non-compliance.

**2. Escalated Notification Requirements**

If no response is received:

- Second notice will be issued after 5 days.
- Final notice will be issued after the 10-day planning period expires.
- Notices may also be issued to absentee owners through certified mail.

Failure to respond to notifications will be treated as non-compliance (see VII below).

**b. Repair Timeline Requirements**

**i. Ten-Day Planning Period**

Within 10 days of receiving initial notice, the customer must:

- Contact a licensed contractor to evaluate and schedule the needed repairs, and
- Provide the utility with a written repair plan including estimated repair dates.

**ii. Twenty-Day Repair Period**

Repairs must be completed within 20 days after the customer submits the repair plan.

- The utility may grant an extension for documented contractor availability issues, weather constraints, or unforeseen site conditions.
- Extensions must be requested before the 20-day repair period expires.

**iii. Immediate Repair Requirement**

If the leak worsens, becomes hazardous or a threat to public health and safety, or results in excessive water loss, the utility may declare that immediate repair is required.

- Failure to complete immediate repair may result in same-day water service disconnection, regardless of season or weather conditions.

**c. Winter Reprieve Period**

From November 15 through April 15, the utility may grant a temporary reprieve from required repairs only if the leak is determined to be minimal.

A leak is not eligible for reprieve if it:

- Poses a threat to public health and safety.
- Poses a threat to public or private infrastructure.
- Causes significant or increasing water loss.
- Results in property damage.

If at any point during the reprieve the leak worsens, the reprieve is revoked and immediate repair may be required.

The reprieve does not eliminate the customer's obligation to repair the leak once the reprieve period ends.

**d. Financing and Assessment Options**

The utility offers tax assessment financing to assist customers with repair costs for qualifying water service line leaks.

**i. Eligibility and Terms**

- Only work completed by licensed contractors qualifies.
- Assessment paperwork must be completed and approved before work begins.
- Upon approval, the utility will pay the contractor directly.
- The repair cost will be added to the customer's property tax bill and repaid over an approved term at a specified interest rate.
- The utility will provide estimated project costs, financing terms, and annual payment estimates upon request.

•

**VI. Roles and Responsibilities**

Customers are responsible for the timely repair of leaking residential water service lines pursuant to this policy. The roles, responsibilities, and actions of both the customer and the Utility during the leak response and repair process are outlined as follows:

**a. Utility Responsibility**

The utility is responsible for:

- All water system infrastructure up to and including the curb stop (curb box).
- The water meter and all associated meter equipment (endpoints, reading devices, hardware).
- Maintaining access to utility-owned equipment when on customer property.

**b. Customer Responsibility**

The customer is responsible for:

- The water service line from the curb stop to the home, building, or internal plumbing.
- Ensuring safe and unobstructed access to utility-owned equipment located on or inside the property.
- Hiring a licensed contractor to complete repairs on customer-owned service lines.
- All costs associated with repairing leaks on customer-owned infrastructure.

The Public Utilities Director and Operations Manager are responsible for the administration and enforcement of this policy.

**VII. Compliance and References**

Failure to comply with any requirement of this policy—including failure to plan repairs, schedule repairs, complete repairs, or respond to notifications—will result in enforcement actions including:

**a. Water Service Disconnection**

The utility may disconnect water service immediately when:

- The customer fails to comply with required timelines
- The leak poses a threat to public health or safety
- The leak results in excessive water loss
- The customer refuses to schedule or complete repairs

**b. Utility Performed Repairs**

- The utility may arrange for the repair to be completed by a licensed contractor.
- The full cost of the repair, plus administrative fees, will be assessed to the property.
- Water service will not be restored until:
  - The leak is fully repaired; and
  - All charges, assessments, penalties, and fees are paid in full.

**VIII. Associated Forms and Attachments**

None

**IX. Review and Update Schedule**

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Public Utilities Commission.

**Revised: November 25, 2025**

**X. Approval and Authority**

The Brainerd Public Utilities Commission approved this policy on November 25, 2025