

Tips for protecting your plumbing this winter

Time to prepare for freezing weather and icy situations.

OUTSIDE PLUMBING

- * Caulk around pipes where they enter the building.
- * Close all foundation vents and fill vent openings with wood or Styrofoam™ blocks.
- * Disconnect garden hoses and drain in-ground irrigation systems.
- * Wrap outside faucets or hose bibs with insulation if you don't have a separate outside valve to turn them off. Use newspaper or rags (covered with plastic wrap), fiberglass or molded foam-insulating covers, which are available at hardware stores.

INSIDE PLUMBING

- * Insulate pipes in unheated areas such as crawl spaces, attics, garages or basements.
- * When below-freezing weather is anticipated, open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms. This allows pipes in these areas to get more heat from inside your home.
- * If you leave home for several days, put your furnace on a low setting. This may not totally prevent freezing pipes, but it can help.
- * When temperatures drop below freezing, consider letting faucets slightly drip, particularly faucets farthest from the street or left uninsulated. Use cold water to avoid gas or electric heating charges. Note: this will cause an increase in your bill.

What if pipes freeze?

- * Thaw plumbing lines safely with a hair dryer or heat lamp. Once the pipe has thawed, make sure to leave a little water running so the pipe doesn't freeze again.
- * Do NOT open the water meter box near the curb. Opening the box could increase the chance of freezing water at the meter.

What if pipes break?

- * Shut off your water and water heater.
- * If you are unable to find your water shut-off valve, call Emergency Dispatch at **(503) 823-4874** for assistance.
- * It is the property owner's responsibility to repair any broken pipes beyond the meter box, on the customer's side.

Winter Water Use Determines Sewer Charges

Average sewer volumes and charges for the year are established between November and April when outdoor water usage is low for most accounts. Your summer water and sewer bill will be less if you make an effort to reduce the amount of water going into the sewer system over the winter.

What does toilet flushing really cost me?



Your old toilet could be costing you more than you realize. A five gallon toilet could cost you over \$500 per year for a family of four. Replacing your toilet could easily cost you less than that, especially if you install it yourself.

If you are considering replacing an older toilet, look for the EPA's WaterSense® label. To earn this label, WaterSense toilets must use no more than 1.28 gallons per flush (gpf) and meet rigorous performance criteria.



For a list of approved toilets, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Toilet consumption	Flushes per day*	Gallons used per year	Toilet cost per person per year **
WaterSense 1.28 gallons/flush	5	2,336	\$33.17
1.6 gallons/flush	5	2,920	\$41.46
3.5 gallons/flush	5	6,388	\$90.71
5 gallons/flush	5	9,125	\$129.58

* National estimates say that each person flushes the toilet five times daily

** Based on the 7/1/11 rate for 1 Ccf (748 gallons) at \$10.63 (\$7.54 for sewer and \$3.09 for water)

Go Green – Go Paperless!

The Portland Water Bureau now offers paperless online billing.

Customers can access their bill as soon as it is issued and submit credit/debit card or bank payments online.

Auto Pay

Pay your bill automatically through deductions to your bank account, or by charging to your credit/debit card.

Sign up for E-Bill and Auto Pay at www.portlandoregon.gov/water.

You must have a valid email address, and a PortlandOnline account linked to your Water/Sewer account.

Curious about your water?

Start reading **the Water Blog** for timely updates about bureau news and issues that impact your water. Get to know your water and stay informed.

www.portlandonline.com/water/blog

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Randy Leonard, Commissioner
David G. Shaff, Administrator

The City of Portland will make reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities. Please notify us no less than five (5) business days prior to the event by phone at 503-823-7404, by the city's TTY at 503-823-6868, or by the Oregon Relay Service at 1-800-735-2900.