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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Portland Water Bureau Makes Ready for Cold Weather; Public Can To**

PORTLAND, OR – Portland Water Bureau (PWB) Maintenance & Construction crews are ready to respond 24 hours, seven days a week to repair broken water mains and address water emergencies.

During this upcoming cold snap, the bureau will also be staffing up to respond to calls for assistance that may come in after regular business hours as our customers return home from work. In addition to extended hours for dispatch personnel, the bureau will have additional urgent responders available on shift until 8:00 pm each day.

Over the coming weekend, in addition to dispatch staff, PWB will have two urgent responders working from 6:45 am to 4:15 pm and is prepared to call in additional staff for any swing and overnight shifts as necessary.

The Portland Water Bureau reminds its customers that icy winds and dipping temperature have the potential to cause freezing pipes that can damage private property. Here are several precautions the public can take now to help minimize potential impacts:

- Inside your house make sure that hot and cold pipes are insulated in unheated areas, such as the garage, crawl space or attic.
- Open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms to allow pipes behind walls and under floors to get additional heat from inside your house.

- Let a slight drip of water run from faucets when temperatures dip below freezing. This keeps water moving, making it less likely to freeze.
- Outside the house, disconnect and drain hoses from faucets.
- Wrap faucets and backflow assemblies with insulating covers or material.
- Cover foundation vents with foam blocks, thickly folded newspaper or cardboard.

While completing these preparations, it's also important to know the location of the house or building's main water shut-off valve in case a pipe breaks inside. Show household members where the shut-off valve can be found in case of an emergency.

Most shut-off valves are located in the following locations: (1) The crawl space or basement, where the water line from the meter enters the home. (2) In the garage where the water line enters the wall or ceiling, near the water heater or laundry hookup. (3) Outside the house near the foundation, often protected by a concrete ring or clay pipe.

During extreme cold weather, pipes can freeze and potentially break. To determine if pipes are frozen, turn on faucets throughout the home; if some faucets work and others do not, you may have a frozen pipe.

To thaw plumbing lines safely, the Portland Water Bureau recommends using a hair dryer or a heat lamp. Once the pipe has thawed, make sure to leave a little water running so the pipe doesn't freeze again. NEVER thaw a frozen pipe with an open flame.

Remember, PWB crews are not able to help fix frozen pipes between the water meter and house, or pipes inside the house or building. Such repairs are the customer's responsibility and can be performed by a plumber.

Main breaks, service leaks and frozen water meters can also occur as a result of cold weather. If you observe running water in the street, believe you are not receiving water from your meter, or experience an urgent water problem, please contact the Portland Water Bureau's 24/7 Emergency Hotline at 503-823-4874.

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