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Media Release

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REMINDER TO CUSTOMERS: Call Water Bureau 24/7 Emergency Hotline at 503-823-4874 with Urgent Water System Emergencies

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 the cold snap, the Water Bureau has increased staffing to dispatch and respond to water system emergencies during regular and after business hours. In addition, the bureau will have added urgent responders ready for deployment.

Please note that Water Bureau 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.

If customers experience urgent water system problems, including running water in the street or no water to the home, contact the Portland Water Bureau's 24/7 Emergency Hotline at 503-823-4874.

Be Prepared

The icy winds and dipping temperature have the potential to cause damage to your home by freezing pipes and leaving you without flowing water. There are many precautions you can take now to help minimize later impacts.

Start Now

Before freezing weather hits, take a walk around the outside of your home:

- Disconnect and drain hoses from outside faucets.
- Wrap backflow assemblies and outside faucets with insulating material.
- Cover foundation vents with foam blocks, thickly folded newspaper or cardboard.

Inside your home, make sure:

- Hot and cold pipes are insulated in unheated areas, such as the garage, crawl space or attic.
- Cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms are open, providing pipes with additional heat from inside your home.
- Let a slight drip of water run from faucets when temperatures dip below freezing. This keeps water moving, making it less likely to freeze.

While completing these preparations, make sure to identify your main water shutoff valve in case of a broken pipe. Go a step further and show household members where the main water shutoff valve is located so they know how to turn off water to the house in case of an emergency.

Frozen Pipes

During extreme cold weather, pipes can freeze and 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.

If there is no water to your home, the problem may be at the street. Contact the Portland Water Bureau's 24/7 Emergency Hotline at 503-823-4874 so we can ensure water is flowing from your meter correctly.

Broken Pipes

If you experience a broken pipe, act immediately.

1. Turn off the water to your water heater by turning the shut off valve above the hot water heater.
2. Next, turn off the main water shutoff valve. Most shutoff valves are located in the following locations:
 - In the crawl space or basement, where the water line enters the home.
 - In the garage where the water line enters the wall or ceiling, near the water heater or laundry hookup.
 - Outside near the foundation, often protected by a concrete ring or clay pipe.
3. Call a plumber to assist you with repairs and get your water in working order.

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