



# WAUSAU WATERWORKS

FOR YOU!

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## Keep the Heat In and the Cold Out

As we all know, our winters can get pretty frigid here in Central Wisconsin, which can have an effect on water meters and water pipes inside the home too. Homeowners are encouraged to make sure basement doors and windows are closed tightly and that heat is allowed to flow freely around water meters. Heat should be kept at around 50 degrees in basements or wherever pipes and water meters reside.

Thawing frozen pipes can be a little tricky, and should only be done with a hair dryer or heat tape. NEVER use an open flame. Before starting to thaw, it is important to know where your water shutoff valve is located, (typically on either side of the water meter) and to make sure it operates as expected. When thawing, if you were to discover that a pipe has a crack, you should immediately shut off the water supply. Wausau Water Works can also turn off your water service out by the street however there is a fee to turn the service back on.

Vacant properties need more attention during the winter months. Again, it is important to keep heat in the property, including the basements. (Setting thermostats at no less than 50 degrees is recommended.) Leave doors open under sinks or other closed areas to help circulate the warm air, especially those located on outside walls, and have a trusted friend or relative check the property regularly if you're unable to check it yourself. If you flush the toilet, make sure it stops completely. We often see properties that are vacant during winter months have high water usage when a toilet is flushed but doesn't turn off as expected. It can then run until the next time it is flushed, when the stopper is reset. Also, never leave an outside hose connected during the winter months, even those with freezeless faucets.

Properties that are expected to be vacant for a longer period of time or are in foreclosure should have the water service turned off at the street, the meter removed and fixtures winterized. This eliminates the potential for broken pipes, property damage and high bills.



## Happy Retirement

Retirement wishes are sent to Ric Frahm who retired on December 31, 2012 after 28 years on the Sewer Collection Crew. We all wish Ric the happiest of retirements.

## Water Main Break Discovered in Wetlands

Every year, Wausau Water Works experiences a number of water main breaks. These are typically the result of the ground shifting either from frost, or as seen this year, extremely dry conditions.

Due to that fact, we typically hire a consultant about every other year to review our system for potential leaks. The consultants will listen on hydrants and valve covers in the street for anything that could possibly be an issue. In 2011, we hired a consultant to do such a survey. Although a few minor leaks were determined, nothing significant surfaced. However, when we prepared our Annual Report to the Public Service Commission we found at that time that we had higher than expected water loss. This triggered staff to start reviewing all possible causes. After exhausting all the possibilities, it was determined that we needed to do another survey of our water system. Again, a few hydrants were found to have minor issues along with a couple of service leaks, but after almost two weeks into the survey very few issues were found. Then late on a Friday afternoon, a large leak was found in a wetland on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Unlike most main breaks which surface in a roadway, this particular section of water main ran cross country and the water was entering the Bos Creek about 300 feet off the roadway in a remote section of the City.

The ductile iron water main, which was installed in 1982, was isolated and repairs were made early the next week to repair the 2-1/2 to 3" hole at the bottom of the pipe. The repair was made and the pipe wrapped with a polyurethane membrane to avoid further contact with the corrosive soils. However, when the water was turned back on the following day, it was found that another leak existed further down the pipe, so the main was again shut down. The second repair meant digging under the creek which required DNR approval to divert the creek. When the main was dug at this point, it was found that the pipe had numerous weak spots and had deteriorated so severely that it was determined that additional repairs would not be prudent. That section of main was then abandoned and a new water main was installed under 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

It seems that anything that could have possibly gone wrong with a main break situation did in this case. The main was in a remote section of the City, feeding only one commercial property; it was one of only a few water mains that run cross country rather than in the roadway; the lost water was feeding into a creek; deterioration of this type on a pipe that is only 30 years old is very unusual, as we have many pipes that have been in service for up to 100 years. The break in the pipe didn't just occur overnight, but was likely going on for



*Top Photo: Water from the main break discharges into the Bos Creek. Middle Photo: Utility contractor digs in the wetlands to make repairs to the water main. Bottom Photo: A section of the pipe showing the deterioration and pocking caused from corrosive soils.*

some time before it was found. An extremely hot, dry summer also caused high water pumpage further masking the problem.

Water main breaks can occur at all times of the year, and Wausau Water Works employees strive to repair breaks as quickly as possible to ensure high quality drinking water for our residents and businesses as well as to keep our loss water numbers in check and keep our utility operating as efficiently as possible.

## Reminder for Residents about Summer Sprinkling

Residents who do outside sprinkling of lawns or gardens during the summer months are reminded that they may want to install a water only meter to avoid sewer charges for the water that is used outdoors.

All customers are charged for sewer based on the amount of water they use unless a separate water meter is installed for outside sprinkling. A couple of exception may apply, such as for new lawn construction or discharge from swimming pools that does not go into the sanitary sewer. All requests for adjustments are to be made in writing and must meet the criteria of the Sewer consumption Adjustment Policy.

No adjustments will be considered for the following:

- Any type of plumbing leak (e.g. toilet leaks, leaking faucets or broken pipes, irrigation systems, etc.) or increases in sewage charges as a result of other surreptitious use of water.
- Any leaks resulting from vacant or neglected properties
- No adjustments will be offered on accounts that are not in "good standing".

Customer Service staff are happy to review account history with residents to see if their typical summer usage would warrant installation of an irrigation meter.

Forms to request a sewer adjustment are available at the Customer Service Department in City Hall or on the Wausau Water Works website at: [www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/WausauWaterWorks/Billing.aspx](http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Departments/WausauWaterWorks/Billing.aspx)

## Adopt a Hydrant

As winter comes and drops that snowy blanket on everything, it's important to remember your neighborhood fire hydrant as you're shoveling or snow blowing. Remember, keeping hydrants free of snow and accessible to fire fighters could mean saving your property or your neighbors and could mean the difference between life and death.



## Make Sewer Back Up Insurance A 2013 New Year's Resolution

With the start of a new year, we all like to come up with resolutions to make our lives better. One that shouldn't be overlooked is to purchase sewer backup insurance.

Sewer backup insurance can be added to most homeowner's policies at a minimal expense. It's typically a good value when you consider what it costs to replace goods and clean up the mess. This is especially important for homeowners who have improved basements.

Backups are typically the result of a blockage in either the homeowner's sewer lateral or the City's sewer main the street. It should be noted that damages from blockages in the City's mains are not automatically reimbursed by the utility. We follow the Wisconsin State Statutes as it pertains to negligence and as long as we have maintained the main within the last 3-5 years, there may not be coverage. That is why it is important for homeowners to carry sewer backup insurance. Another consideration is the amount of coverage, especially if you have an improved basement.

The potential for backups can be reduced by having your sewer lateral cleaned on a regular basis and by not putting things like grease, cleaning wipes, diapers or other personal hygiene products down the drain. These items should be placed in your garbage can.



## Businesses Reminded of Cross Connection Inspection Requirements

Businesses that completed Cross Connection Inspections in 2011 are reminded that they will need to have an inspection of their internal water system completed in 2013. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources mandates that owners of commercial, industrial and publicly owned properties conduct a Cross Connection Survey every two years.

A cross connection can occur when a drop in pressure in the water system causes a back siphoning into the water system (such as when a hydrant is opened, or a water main breaks). Making sure that no cross connection exists ensures a safe drinking water supply for our customers.

Residential customers can do their part to make sure the water supply stays safe by installing hose bib vacuum breakers on outside faucets and removing any hoses that may be connected to laundry tubs or other sinks or tubs. Additional information is provided to residential property owners during routine meter upgrades.

For more information on cross connections, contact Wausau Water Works at 715-261-7265.

## Water Works Rate Schedule

### Water Rates: Effective 7/1/10

**Quarterly Service Charge** (based on size of water meter)

5/8 inch meter	\$ 15.45
3/4 inch meter	15.45
1 inch meter	24.72
1-1/4 inch meter	37.08
1-1/2 inch meter	43.26
2 inch meter	64.89
3 inch meter	117.42
4 inch meter	166.86
6 inch meter	315.18
8 inch meter	482.04
10 inch meter	707.61
12 inch meter	933.18

**Plus Volume Charge below:**

First 6,000 cubic feet used each quarter - \$1.69 per 100 cubic feet.  
Next 54,000 cubic feet used each quarter - \$1.53 per 100 cubic feet.  
Over 60,000 cubic feet used each quarter - \$1.16 per 100 cubic feet.

**Wholesale Service (Brokaw):**

Quarterly Charge \$167.00, Volume Charge: \$1.46 per 100 cu. ft.

### Sewer Rates: Effective 1/1/11

**Quarterly Service Charge** (based on size of water meter)

5/8 inch meter	\$ 17.00
3/4 inch meter	17.00
1 inch meter	23.00
1-1/4 inch meter	32.00
1-1/2 inch meter	37.00
2 inch meter	62.00
3 inch meter	112.00
4 inch meter	183.00
6 inch meter	361.00
8 inch meter	568.00

**Plus Volume Charge below:**

All volume, as recorded by the water meter each quarter, shall be charged at the rate of \$2.59 per 100 cubic feet. Unmetered sewer rate is \$85.85 per quarter outside the City of Wausau.

### Private Fire Protection: Eff. 3/1/06

(based on size of connection)

2 inch connection	\$ 12.00
3 inch connection	22.00
4 inch connection	37.00
6 inch connection	74.00
8 inch connection	117.00
10 inch connection	176.00
12 inch connection	256.00

### Public Fire Protection: Eff. 7/1/10

(based on size of water meter)

5/8 inch meter	\$ 8.96
3/4 inch meter	8.96
1 inch meter	22.25
1-1/4 inch meter	32.75
1-1/2 inch meter	44.19
2 inch meter	71.07
3 inch meter	132.87
4 inch meter	222.48
6 inch meter	444.96
8 inch meter	704.52
10 inch meter	1056.78

**Wholesale Public Fire Protection (Brokaw)** Quarterly Charge: \$2431.00

Payments must be received in the City of Wausau Customer Service Department, City Hall, by the 20th of each month. Payments received after the 20th of the month are subject to late payment charges in the amount of 1% of the outstanding balance.

**Payments made at grocery stores, electronically, or through the mail, via the Milwaukee lockbox address should be made at least seven (7) days prior to the due date to ensure timely receipt.**