

# Staff Report to Council

**Title:** Updated Frozen Water Procedure

**Report Number:** Environmental Services-2023-41

**Director:** Infrastructure & Development

**Manager:** Environmental Services

**Meeting Date:**  
Wednesday, December 13, 2023

**Date to be considered by Council:**  
Wednesday, December 13, 2023

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## Recommendation:

That Council rescind the previous policy ES 5.1 Frozen Water Policy approved by Resolution #03/09/16-03, and support staff report implementing a new procedure for Frozen Water Services as presented.

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## Executive Summary:

Staff are reviewing existing policies in order to provide recommendations for Council's consideration. The Environmental Services Department reviewed the existing policy related to frozen water in pipes policy and are recommending updates to the approach to make it an operating procedure with improvements to the process in order to implement actions and protocols to avoid issues with frozen water in pipes during the winter months. The Municipality acknowledges that water is an essential service to all its residents connected to the drinking water system, and the update of this procedure will strive to maintain this service through periods of significant cold weather in winter months.

## Strategic Priorities:

D.17-Improve organization efficiency and be more innovative

## Financial Considerations:

There are no current financial implications for the Municipality to consider. However, as the procedure indicates, should this program be implemented because of weather circumstances, costs such as lost revenue from running taps, staffing time related to public information, thawing lines, and possibly digging services would all have a financial impact on the operating budget.

**Policy:**

Update of existing policy ES 5.1.

**Context and Background Information:**

To maintain potable water for all residents during the winter months where significant cold weather could allow water services to freeze, a new frozen water procedure has been drafted which allows for better tracking purposes. The previous policy relied primarily on the Overall Responsible Operator to monitor depth of frost and make determinations based on those figures. This method does not provide significant benefit to the department, and was based more on opinion, than a solid tracking method.

The revised procedure tracks the mean temperature through local weather stations. Once started, the mean temperature will be tracked to monitor the possibilities of frozen water services. The objective of the program is to provide residents with advanced warning to prevent frozen water services. This would include a door-to-door campaign to have residents begin to start running a tap, door knockers that can be left to communicate with residents if we are unable to speak directly to them, and collection of data for billing purposes. The procedure goes on to explain thawing processes, vulnerable sectors that will be prioritized for thawing, history of frozen services and conditions of private property versus public property.

The procedure goes on to explain accessing potable water via fill stations or through a neighboring property. It makes suggested guidelines to try and prevent damage and ensure a safe drinking water source for all residents.

**Consultation Overview:**

Staff were able to access data from the 2014 and 2015 seasons, when the Municipality last encountered these issues. This data included civic addresses, dates the service froze, and some data contained if the freeze was on public or private property. Furthermore, staff were able to access Environment Canada data to establish the mean temperature and when services began to freeze. This record keeping enabled staff to setup a four-stage approach to better manage frozen services.

**Origin:**

Policy review.

**Implementation Considerations:**

The procedure will be implemented on an annual basis through the Environmental Services department. Tracking will be completed, and data closely monitored. In the event the procedure becomes active, Council would be informed through the standard monthly compliance report, and be given data around current frozen services, services that are currently running water to avoid freezing, and any associated costs for repairs or thawing of services.

**Risk Analysis:**

As Kincardine continues to make significant investment and upgrades to underground infrastructure, the frozen procedure list will continue to be updated. Properties with previous freezing issues will be removed, and this could also factor in the potential for future upgrades.

Frozen services provided a significant impact to municipal operations including resources associated with thawing, customer complaints, overtime, and the possibility of essential service disruptions to residents.

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**Attachments:** Frozen Water Policy and Related Documents

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