



P.O. Box 46
Kotzebue, AK 99752

City Hall (907) 442-3401

Police Dept. (907) 442-3351

Fire Dept. (907) 442-3404

Public Works (907) 442-3401

Public Service Announcement

to

Prevent Water Line Freeze-up

The City of Kotzebue encourages all residents to do their part to avoid water line freeze-up during the winter. We at the City of Kotzebue work hard to keep the water on all winter long by keeping the water flowing in a continuous loop using circulation pumps in the water plant, insulated piping underground, and warming the water to 42 deg. by adding waste heat from the power plant when it is very cold. These three elements: circulation, insulation, and heat, are what is necessary to keep your water on during the cold, arctic winters that we have here. Every year there are people in our city who lose their water service due to frozen water lines. This inconvenience is usually preventable and sometimes costly. Here are some simple steps that you can take to ensure that your water stays running throughout the long winters here:

1. **Circulation:** Your residence should have two water lines that leave the water main under the street and come into your house and form a loop, with a tee in the loop that feeds water to your household piping. This loop must have water circulating at all times during cold temperatures so that it does not freeze. Make sure that your circulation pump is on and that the supply and return valves are open.
2. **Insulation:** Your residence should have an “arctic box” on the outside of your home. This is normally a plywood enclosure above the arctic pipe that carries your water lines to the house. This “arctic box” must be free of cracks and gaps that will allow cold air to enter and freeze the pipes or valves contained in this box. This box must be insulated and the insulation must stay dry. Check your arctic box for cracks, gaps, and wet or missing insulation and perform maintenance as necessary. Make sure both the supply and return valves are open here as well. If your arctic box has a by-pass valve then it should be closed when the supply and return valves are open, and it should be open when the supply and return valves are closed.
3. **Heat:** You may or may not have heat tape. This is the easiest way to thaw frozen water lines, but as long as the circulation pump is on, the valves are open, and the arctic box is dry, insulated, and free of cracks or gaps you should not need the heat tape on continuously. It is only there to thaw the lines in case they do freeze. Heat tape should not overlap itself, and should feel warm when on. Do not use heat guns or space heaters to thaw the pipes in the arctic box. When left unattended they have melted the water lines resulting in very costly repairs to the homeowner. If the lines are frozen underground thawing only the arctic box will not restore water service.

The City of Kotzebue Water Plant is willing to help you with these maintenance checks as it is in everybody's best interest to keep your water on, but any needed repairs are the responsibility of the homeowner. We thank you for your help and understanding and look forward to trouble-free water service throughout the winter. For a copy of this PSA for reference call 442-5209 or email the water plant at mlazarus@kotzebue.org.