



City of Onalaska Public Works Quarterly Newsletter

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Frozen Laterals

Now that we are nearing the winter season it is important to take steps to prevent frozen pipes in your home.

A water lateral is the pipe attached to the public water main that brings water directly into the home or business. Typically these pipes can freeze in cold basements or in the ground itself. In the former case, getting heat to the water pipes in the basement will thaw the frozen section. Open flames should never be used to provide heat. When a water lateral pipe freezes in the ground, thawing can be more difficult and expensive. To help avoid having frozen pipe laterals, utility customers can run water from the cold water tap in your home a minimum of twice a day for at least five minutes time, especially during hours when there is little water usage. If you notice a drop in water pressure or the water appears rusty or discolored, then run the water until pressure increases and or the discoloration disappears. Additionally, you can run a very narrow, smaller than a pencil sized stream of cold water, from one faucet overnight when no other water is being used. This slight flow of water will help prevent freezing. If you will be away from your home or business for long weekends or extended periods of time, you may want to make arrangements for someone to stop by daily to check on your heat and water situation.



FUN FACTS!

- ⇒ Our five reservoirs store 3,275,000 gallons of water which aid in water pressure and fire protection.
- ⇒ The Onalaska Public Works department takes care of all the cleaning of lift stations, sewer mains and manholes in Onalaska.

HOW WE ARE RESPONDING TO

COVID 19

The Public Works Department is committed to providing a safe working environment and a safe environment to serve the public. The Public Works building, which is located at 252 Mason St, is not open to the public; however we can assist you over the phone or through email.

The Public Works Department has installed a plexiglass divider at our service counter and marked out six foot social distancing spaces in the waiting area. There is hand sanitizer available at the front counter and throughout the building for the employees and visitors. These measures will be in place for when the building opens back up to the public.

Public Works Department Anniversaries

Mitch Fenske ———— 3 years

SALT BRINE PROGRAM

We are fast approaching the winter months and that means snow and ice on our streets. Here are some common questions regarding the city's use of salt brine on the streets.

WHAT IS SALT BRINE?

Salt brine is water saturated with sodium chloride, or more simply rock salt dissolved in water. It will be an integral part of Onalaska's anti-icing program beginning in 2016 to take a proactive approach in controlling snow and ice on Onalaska's streets and roadways.

WHEN IS SALT BRINE USED?

Salt brine is applied by spraying it onto the pavement up to 72 hours prior to a winter storm.

PRE-TREATING?

Pre-treating is a snow fighting strategy used in anticipation of storms that accumulating ice or snow is predicted. If brine is applied just before a winter storm, salt brine will begin working as soon as the first snowflake falls which will help delay the accumulation of snow and ice on the pavement.

WHY USE SALT BRINE?

Salt brine is much more cost effective and brine allows the Public Works Department to treat the streets prior to the storm. The ability to pre-treat the streets will help to keep snow and ice from bonding to the pavement. This will allow the roads to return to bare pavement much more quickly once the storm has passed.

HOW IS SALT BRINE APPLIED TO THE ROAD WHEN PRE-TREATING?

Motorists / residents can expect to see Onalaska Department of Public Works Crews pre-treating the roads with salt brine using our specially modified trucks.

These trucks will allow brine to be sprayed on the road surface at the correct volume per road mile.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN FOLLOWING A VEHICLE APPLYING SALT BRINE?

Vehicles applying salt brine usually will be traveling less than thirty miles per hour. Motorists should stay back approximately 500 feet behind the vehicle.

WHAT ARE OTHER ADVANTAGES OF USING SALT BRINE?

1. Anti-icing returns street surfaces back to normal faster, resulting in fewer accidents and delays. 2. Using a liquid ice-melter jumpstarts the melting process because salt needs moisture to be effective. 3. Brine doesn't bounce or blow off the road surface so material is used more efficiently. 4. Salt residue stays on the road ready to work when precipitation begins. 5. Crews can cover more area for less cost by using brine. 6. Increased efficiency of brine results in less salt used per storm event. Less salt used = less cost. 7. Salt brine is better for the environment.

CROSS CONNECTION AND METER PROGRAM

The City plans on restarting our cross connection and meter program mid October. We had put it on hold due Covid 19, but our ready with our new safety precautions to restart the program.

If you receive a letter from the Public Works Department regarding your meter and cross connection survey, you will need to call to schedule an appointment. We need to change out the meter in your home and perform the cross connection survey every 20 years.

Our main objective is to protect our residents and the city's water supply from a cross connection contamination. We hope this will help you better understand what cross connections are all about and why the EPA, the State of Wisconsin, and the City of Onalaska think this program is so important. The City of Onalaska Public Works Department will do all residential and low hazard commercial surveys and Hydrocorp has been contracted to do the City's high hazard commercial surveys.

"Cross-connection means a connection or potential connection between any part of a water supply system and another environment containing substances in a manner that, under any circumstances, would allow the substances to enter the water supply system by means of back siphonage or back pressure." Comm 81.01(65)

