

## **Kirkwood Water: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is my water pressure so bad?**

Low water pressure can be indicative of several problems or situations. If water pressure is lower than usual at one source (faucet, tub, hose, etc.) but sufficient in the rest of the building, it is safe to assume that the fixture itself and/or the pipe feeding the fixture needs to be repaired or replaced at the property owner's expense. It could also be something as simple as a clogged faucet screen. If water pressure is lower than usual over the entire building, this could indicate a water meter problem, aging or undersized plumbing (including the service line), or a significant leak on the service line. The water department should be contacted should you experience a decrease in water pressure over the entire building. Please call (314) 984-5936 to arrange for a time when maintenance personnel can assess the situation. You can learn more about low water pressure by reading our checklist.

### **What is the hardness of my water?**

When you purchase some appliances that require water for operation (such as dishwashers), most manufacturer's suggest that you find out the hardness of your drinking water. The hardness of Kirkwood's drinking water is 7.5 gpg (grains per gallon).

### **What do I do if my pipes freeze in the winter?**

If your pipes freeze, the first thing to do is locate the house shut-off valve in case the frozen pipe bursts. It is usually located on your water service pipeline immediately after it enters the basement wall. You should then contact a plumber for repairs. The Water Department can shut your water off outside in an emergency only, but there is a charge involved. If you call for this service during normal working hours, the charge is \$25.00. Overtime callouts are very expensive. Therefore, it is best if you can shut your water off yourself. Feel free to read the frozen pipes checklist below to learn more.

### **What is the source of the City's water supply?**

All of the drinking water in Kirkwood is purchased from Missouri-American Water Company, which serves all of St. Louis County. The water originates from the Missouri River, is treated by Missouri American, purchased by the City, and redistributed to Kirkwood customers through City mains. Please refer to Kirkwood Water's Annual Water Quality Report, available elsewhere on this page, for more information about your drinking water.

### **Who is responsible for maintenance of the drinking water service line to my property?**

Underground water services to individual buildings are not owned by the City of Kirkwood, but are owned and maintained by the property owner. Underground water mains that serve entire

neighborhoods are part of the city's distribution system, and the city is therefore responsible for their maintenance. Leaks on service lines are typically covered by the Water Service Repair Fund (read more about that elsewhere on this page).

### **What are my options for having my inside water meter read?**

To accommodate customers' work schedules, early morning appointments (7-8 a.m. Monday-Thursday) are available by calling Customer Service at (314) 822-5843, and Saturday appointments (one Saturday per month) can be scheduled by calling the Kirkwood Water Department at (314) 984-5936. Residents can have a remote reading device installed at no cost, which would eliminate the need for having the inside meter read. To do so, call the Kirkwood Water Department at (314) 984-5936 to schedule its installation.

### **FROZEN PIPES CHECKLIST**

Here are some tips and things to consider if you feel you may have a frozen water pipe.

- Is the flow of water interrupted over the entire building, or just one location? If it is just one location, find out if and where the pipes are running through an outside wall. It is possible to have just one frozen pipe. If the entire building has no water then it is possible that the water meter and/or the private water service line to the building is frozen.
- Is your water meter located inside the building or outside in a meter pit? If the meter is located in a meter pit outside, check to be sure the meter pit cover is in place, if it is ajar, or if the cover and/or frame have holes in them. If the cover is missing, ajar or the cover and/or frame has holes that are exposing the meter to cold air, you will need to provide a solid cover over the pit so that the meter and/or pipes within the pit can thaw. This process can take hours to produce results. To speed the thawing process, try hanging a light bulb down in the meter pit to provide slow warming of the air within the pit. Once the thawing process is complete, be prepared for the possibility of a broken pipe or water meter. When water lines freeze, this can sometimes cause the bottom of the water meter to break. Since it is the property owner's responsibility to maintain the water meter pit frame and cover, it will be your responsibility to replace any defective frame or cover. Frames and covers can be purchased from the City's Water Department at 212 S. Taylor Ave. You may contact the Water Department at (314) 984-5936 for current pricing.
- If your water meter is located in a finished area of your basement, check to be sure that the water meter has been properly insulated and has protection from freezing during winter months.

- Do your water pipes run through an attic because there is no basement in the building? Lack of insulation between the roof and ceilings can cause pipes to freeze.
- Do your water pipes run through your garage? Pipes wrapped in heat tape can freeze if the heat tape wears out. The heat tape can burn out like a light bulb, but you may not be aware of this until the pipes freeze. Be sure to check your heat tape to be sure it is functioning properly before the winter months arrive.

If you feel you have a frozen pipe and/or water meter and you need assistance, Kirkwood Water Department maintenance personnel can provide you with the following:

- 1) Shut off your water service during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday). If you feel you have a frozen water pipe and/or water meter and feel you need immediate assistance during our normal business hours, please contact the Kirkwood Water Department at (314) 984-5936.
- 2) We will also make a service call after our normal business hours (after 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and on holidays) to assist you in locating a frozen pipe, shut water off and/or replace a frozen water meter. The cost for a service call after normal business hours is a minimum of \$76.00. There may be an additional charge if the meter has been damaged and needs to be replaced. The property owner must absorb the cost for the replacement of a frozen meter since the property owner is responsible for maintaining their service line in a manner as to avoid freezing. This is stated in the Kirkwood Code of Ordinances, Section 23-117.2. If you feel you have a frozen water pipe and/or water meter and feel you need immediate assistance after our normal business hours, please contact the Police Dispatch at (314) 822-5865.