



For Immediate Release

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Water Issues In Winter

Public Works activities don't slow down during the winter, the focus of the department's activities just shift to snow clearing, planning for the next construction season, water main breaks, and planning for and remediation of shallow buried sanitary sewer main problems.

As cities across Saskatchewan and Canada grapple with aging infrastructure and the need to replace underground systems up to 100 years old, problems are getting more and more common. The city has some 200 kilometres of water lines, 1800 isolation valves (used to isolate and shut off water flows to a particular area when breaks occur) and 6200 service connections to residential and commercial customers.

"Each year, the city has an average of 15 water line breaks which are usually repaired in 24 hours, depending on the complexity of the problem," said Mayor Bob Maloney. "And, like any other problems, they don't just happen on weekdays. Incidents often arise on weekends and in the dead of night," said the Mayor.

A higher percentage of water line breakages occur in winter months, which present their own particular set of problems. Staff have to contend with a wide range of issues when working on line breaks in the winter; severe cold, wind, steam, slips on icy surfaces, frozen ground and bulky clothing, to name just a few of the situations. Additionally, each year there is more utility related infrastructure installed underground, like natural gas, power, fibre optic cable, and these installations all impact the speed of repairs.

"Some of the areas where problems have occurred this winter include Broadway Street and just one week ago on a Sunday on Third Avenue in front of City Hall," said James Kluk, Water and Sewer Systems Manager with the Public Works Department. "While repairs are being made, affected residents and businesses will be notified of the situation and a remedial water supply may be arranged if necessary," he said.

Residents can help mitigate damage and speed repairs by reporting any visible surface water to the Public Works Department at 306-786-1760, day or night. After hours calls are redirected to the on-call staff. If phone lines are busy, remember to leave a detailed message including the nature of the issue and specific address or location affected.

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For further information contact:

Roy Lanaway,
Manager of Communications
City of Yorkton
Phone: 306-828-2424
Mobile: 306-621-2510
rlanaway@yorkton.ca