

Preparing Your Seasonal Water System for Winter

Maine CDC Drinking Water Program • 11 SHS, Augusta, ME 04330 • 287-2070 • www.medwp.com

It is often said “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Preparing your water system now for the long, cold Maine winter can save you a lot of time and expense when you reopen in the spring. The time you will need to spend winterizing depends mostly on the size, design and complexity of your water system. Please consider the procedures outlined below when closing your water system for the season. Following these procedures will help ensure your water system is in good shape and will need fewer repairs when you reopen in the spring:

1. Inspect your entire system and look for problems and damage that need attention or repairs. Look for leaks and exercise valves to ensure they are working properly. Inspect your well cap for openings that could allow rodents, insects, or other contamination to enter, and correct, if necessary. The off season could be a better time for these problems to be fixed, rather than trying to do it while you are open.
2. Turn off the power to your water supply pump.
3. If there is potential for your pressure tank or storage tank to freeze, drain it. If there is no potential for your tanks to freeze, you may choose to leave them full.
4. Drain all of the water from your internal plumbing. If your piping is designed to drain to the lowest point, it may be as simple as opening a water outlet at the highest point in the system and then opening a water outlet at the lowest point. If not, it may be necessary to connect a compressed air source to the highest point and continue to release air into the system until all of the water is forced out of the lowest point. Make sure to cap off or screen any openings into your plumbing system and close all of the valves after the system is drained. For example, if you have plastic plumbing that runs on top of the ground that supplies different buildings while your system is open, when you disconnect the plumbing for the winter, make sure to cap off or screen the plumbing inlet to the building to prevent rodents and bugs from crawling in.
5. Other items to consider draining are jet pumps (after discontinuing power to the pump), chemical feed pumps, hot water heaters (don't forget to shut off power to the hot water heater before draining the tank), furnaces, dishwashers,

toilets, plumbing to refrigerators with ice machines, back flow prevention devices and water meters. This list is not all inclusive and you may have additional appliances or devices that may need to be drained to protect against freezing. Do not forget to add environmentally friendly anti-freeze to your toilet bowls and sink and shower traps to prevent the traps and bowls from cracking and to keep sewer gases from entering buildings.



6. Protect your distribution system by not leaving taps open in the off season. Never use automotive anti-freeze in your water system because it is a health hazard!
7. Turn the power off to all treatment systems. Properly discard any unused chlorine solutions and stock. For other treatment systems, follow the manufactures' instructions for equipment, chemicals or filter media not in use for long periods of time.

Closing your system for the winter may be time consuming in some cases, but it will provide you with peace of mind knowing that at start up, repairs to the system should be minimal.

If you shut down your water system for the winter, please make sure that you flush and shock chlorinate your system in the spring prior to re-opening for the season. We would also recommend collecting an Operations & Maintenance (non-compliance) bacteria sample to make sure that your water system is bacteria free before you open for the season. You can find the shock process and other procedures for opening your seasonal water system at the following Drinking Water Program link: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/water/resources/wakeupyoursystem.htm>



Keep Your Drinking Water Safe:

✓ Protect Your Source

✓ Take Your Samples

✓ Maintain Your Treatment

✓ Inspect Your Pipes & Tanks