



City of Galveston

PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact: Jaree Fortin, Public Information Officer
jfortin@galvestontx.gov | 409.797.3546 Office | 409.692.6514 Cell

City Responds to Thousands of Calls for Broken Water Lines & Enacts Stage 4 of the Water Conservation Plan

As temperatures rise above freezing, City crews continue to work tirelessly to shut off water leaks caused by the freeze. Water conservation for residents now mandatory.

(GALVESTON, TX) January 18, 2018 – With temperatures on the Island hovering well below freezing for over 18 hours, residents and business owners have experienced an unprecedented amount of water leaks due to frozen pipes. The City's utility billing office has received over 3,000 phone calls over the last day and a half and expect the number to continue to rise. The City's municipal utilities crews have been working 16 hour shifts since Monday and will begin working around the clock as we begin to assist residents with shut offs.

Repairs and shut offs on the customers side of the meter are typically the customer's responsibility, however, due to the nature of the event and the limited availability of plumbers locally, City crews are working diligently to assist citizens across the Island. The City is also prepared to forgive any excess use due to the inclement weather on all customers' bills before they are mailed.

The leaks on the Island have depleted the City's water supply to a level that requires the city to enact Stage 4 of their Drought Contingency Plan. With our reserve tanks falling below 60% of their capacity, we have enacted Stage 4 of our Drought Contingency Plan for "Critical Water Shortage Conditions." We are asking residents and businesses to conserve water until the majority all of the freeze related leaks are resolved. We are also asking that second homeowners please check on their properties if they have not yet done so.

"The City has experienced unprecedented water loss due to leaks happening across the Island," said City Manager Brian Maxwell. "This is quickly becoming a water emergency and we hope that residents will heed the message and help us to conserve the water we do have in reserves. We are hoping to quickly resolve these issues and rescind the mandatory water rationing as soon as possible."

There are numerous restrictions that are enacted and enforceable by law during Stage 4.

Things You Can Be Fined for During Stage 4 of the Drought Contingency Plan

- Irrigation of landscaped areas can only be done on Mondays and Thursdays for customers on the East side of the City (east of 103rd Street), and Wednesdays and Saturdays for water customers on the West side of the City (west of 103rd Street). Irrigation of landscaped areas with potable water shall be limited to designated watering days between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. OR between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 10 p.m., and shall be by means of hand-held hoses, hand-held buckets, or drip irrigation only.
- Use of potable water to wash any motor vehicle, motorbike, boat, trailer, airplane or other vehicle not occurring on the premises of a commercial car wash and commercial service stations and not in the immediate interest of public health, safety, and welfare is prohibited. Further, such vehicle washing using potable water at commercial car washes and commercial service stations shall occur only between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and between 6:00 p.m. and 10 p.m.
- The filling, refilling, or adding of water to swimming pools, wading pools, and Jacuzzi-type pools is prohibited.
- Operation of any ornamental fountain or pond for aesthetic or scenic purposes is prohibited except where necessary to support aquatic life or where such fountains or ponds are equipped with a recirculation system.
- Unless specifically approved by the Director of Municipal Utilities, no application for new, additional, expanded, or increased-in-size water service connections, meters, service lines, pipeline extensions, mains, or water service





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- facilities of any kind shall be approved, and time limits for approval of such applications are hereby suspended for such time as this drought response stage or a higher-numbered stage shall be in effect.
- The use of water for construction purposes from designated fire hydrants by special permit is prohibited, except with the written permission of the Director of Municipal Utilities.
- The following uses of potable water are considered non-essential in Stage 2 and are prohibited unless services are being provided by a third party for profit company: 1. wash down of any sidewalks, walkways, driveway, parking lot, tennis courts, or other hard surfaced areas; 2. use of water to wash down buildings or structures for purposes other than immediate fire protection; 3. use of water for dust control, except as permitted by the Director of Municipal Utilities
- All restaurants are prohibited from serving water to patrons except on patron request.

If you have a leak, here's what you need to know...

- If you called on Wednesday, January 18th or Thursday, January 19th and have not received a call back you will likely hear back from them Thursday evening or Friday, January 20th. With the high volume of calls, customer service representatives are working late into the evenings to return phone calls from customers.
- If you still need to report a leak, please help us lower the call volume by using this form: www.galvestontx.gov/freeze or emailing your information to: customerservice@galvestontx.gov.
- If you reported a leak, your February bill for January consumption will be automatically adjusted. The City will take an average of your usage over the last 12 months and that will be the amount due for January. January bills will be received in February and due in March.

Ways you can help...

- Conservation is going to be key! Residents and businesses are being asked to help by conserving water. You can find numerous ways to conserve on the city's website at www.galvestontx.gov/meetwalter.
- If you have a question concerning your utility bill please consider using the form on our website at www.galvestontx.gov/utilitybilling or emailing customerservice@galvestontx.gov to help keep the phone lines open for those customers who have an immediate need.

For additional questions or concerns please call the City Manager's Office at 409-797-3520.

