

# **SOUDAN MN. FROZEN WATER SERVICE**

ORDINANCE 2018-16

## **1. Purpose**

It is the policy of the Town of Soudan to comply with all applicable state and federal regulatory requirements.

The Town intends to provide effective and efficient maintenance to its water distribution system by evaluating political, social, safety, and economic concerns, among others.

As of 2018, the Town has approximately 8 miles of public water distribution mains, 41 fire hydrants and 240 services within its water distribution system. Procedures identified in this policy are intended to maintain the Town's water distribution system, to prevent freeze ups, to extend the life of the system, and to identify responsibility for thawing frozen main and services, and for the cost of any repairs resulting from thawing. The Town has developed and implemented this policy that takes into consideration public safety, the Town's budget and personnel, environmental concerns, and the cost of implementation versus the benefit to be achieved. The Town will use its employees, equipment and/or private contractors to provide this service on Town owned mains. Owners of services shall use insured contractors for repairs on individual services.

While the Town fully intends to meet the guidelines established in this policy, there may be times when this is not feasible. Issues including, but not limited to, budget constraints, critical equipment failure, or weather and other emergencies may prevent the Town from meeting the guidelines established herein. The Maintenance Supervisor or his or her designee may override provisions established within this policy. Deviations from the goals established in this policy will be documented.

The Town will use this policy to guide any water distribution maintenance activities to be provided by a contractor or a party other than the Town.

## **1. Maintenance and Inspection Goals**

### **A. Water Mains**

Scope of Town's Responsibility - The Town will maintain the components of the public water distribution system. This includes water distribution mains, valves, hydrants, and other components. Private property owners are responsible for the maintenance of water distribution components from their property up to and including the connection to the public system.

## B. Water Services

Section 3.05, subdivision 2(c) of the Town Code states “All persons taking the water shall keep their own service pipes, service corporations, stopcocks or curb stops and apparatus in good repair and protected from frost, at their own risk and expense. All water taken or used from the Town water system, unless otherwise ordered by the Town Council, must be metered and paid for, except water used in putting out fire.”

## C. Prevention

The Town has identified areas with a known history of frozen water services within the Town’s asset management system. If the coldest temperature of your water drops to 36 degrees Fahrenheit or below, you may have an impending freeze up and the frost may be getting close to your service line. When this occurs, the Minnesota Rural Water Association suggests that property owners run a small stream of water at all times. A stream of water approximately the width of a pencil should allow the continued passage of water through your water lines. They also suggest that you leave the water running until the frost is out of the ground and the risk of freezing has passed.

The costs associated with this preventative measure will be incurred by the property owner; however it may be less expensive than the plumbing repairs needed if the water line freezes. This is at the property owners’ discretion. Your water utility bill will increase depending upon the size of the water stream and amount of pressure in your area.

## D. Exceptions to Financial Responsibility

Property owners who have documents showing that they have taken measures to prevent their water services from freezing will be allowed to run water during times when frost levels are deeper than normal. In order to qualify for the exception provided by this paragraph, property owners will need to contact the Town before they begin to run water. If the Town determines that the measures taken were adequate, the Town will then track their consumption, calculating their average and adjusting their bills to reflect the average only.

## E. Thawing Frozen Pipes

If water services do freeze, the Town requires that you contact the Township Maintenance Supervisor immediately. Once lines have been thawed, property owners are advised to again contact the Town so that the issue can be documented. The expense incurred for the needed thawing, will be the responsibility of the property owner and can range from several hundred to a few thousand dollars depending on the length of your service and where thawing equipment can be hooked up. Other potential damage may occur during the freezing or thawing process, such as a cracked water line or stray voltage.

The property owner must notify the Town regarding the method of thawing prior to any work taking place. The Town has guidelines and procedures to follow for thawing services to help prevent cross contamination specifically on plastic water lines. Contractors and/or property owners shall be liable for any damage caused by thawing, and provide proof of insurance.

## 2. Personnel Responsibilities and Requirements

### A. Exercise of Professional Judgment

It is expected that Town employees, in accordance with their job duties and responsibilities, will exercise their professional judgment in the implementation of this policy. Further, it is expected that in emergency situations Town employees will be required to exercise their discretion and weigh political, social, and economic considerations including, but not limited to, public and employee safety, the potential for damage to private property and the water distribution system, and environmental concerns.

### B. Training and Education

The Town will provide training to employees responsible for maintenance of and emergency response to issues with the water distribution system. Training of employees will include education necessary to earn and maintain appropriate operator certifications. Training will also address standard operating procedures, proper use of equipment, emergency response and other topics required by state and federal regulatory agencies.

### C. Work Schedule

Full-time Town employees in the Public Works Department will be expected to work eight- hour shifts. In emergencies, employees may be required to work in excess of eight hours. Budget and safety concerns may limit the length of time an employee is permitted to work.

### D. Weather Conditions

Regular water distribution operations will be conducted only when weather conditions do not endanger the Town employees and equipment. Factors that may delay water distribution operations include, but are not limited to: severe cold, severe heat, flooding, rain, snow and other severe weather events.

## 3. Documentation

The Town will document all of its inspection and maintenance activities and emergency responses for its water distribution system.

## 4. Public Education

Periodically, the Town will inform property owners of their responsibilities related to the water distribution system. Information will be posted on the Town website, Facebook, and flyers in the Town utility bills. In extreme conditions, the Town may draft a letter to property owners with a known history of frozen services.

Violation of terms and provisions of this ordinance shall constitute a misdemeanor.

The Ordinance Regulation regarding frozen water services was adopted by the Town Board of Township of Breitung on 28 day of November.

Ayes:

Chairman ✓

Supervisor ✓

Supervisor ✓

Nays 0

Trinity S. Tomasz  
Chairman

Attest:

[Signature]