INSTRUCTIONS FOR TURNING OFF YOUR CURB STOP AND WINTERIZING YOUR HOME

What is a Curb Stop?
Depending on the age of your home it can look different. Older homes might have a 4 to 6 inch white plastic pipe sticking out of the ground with a white cap on the pipe. Newer homes might have a 4 inch metal cap very close to the ground. Regardless of the homes age there should be a slender blue pole about 18 inches west of the curb stop signifying the location of this valve. Yes, buried in the ground inside this pipe is a valve that allows the home owner to stop the flow of water from MAWA’s main water line to their/your house.

Why should I take the time to turn off the Curb Stop?
When you leave your home for an extended period of time – possibly longer than 10 days – and you leave the water pressure on in your home, if a water line should break or freeze, there is no one there to turn off the water or call a plumber. It doesn’t take long for that uncontrolled break to flood your house. The potential damage can be warped floors, mildewed carpet, water stained upholstery, warped or delaminated wooden furniture, ruined shoes, closet content destroyed, and/or damaged walls and ceilings. The smell is not too great either. It should take 5 minutes of your time to turn off your curb stop. Compare that time spent in comparison to the aggravation, frustration, cost and possible increase of insurance premiums making the repairs required with a flooded house.

How does one turn off the Curb Stop?
There are special “keys” used to extend into the above mentioned pipes that will turn the valve. Each home should have a key that will fit your type of valve. Since the valves are buried approximately 6 feet under ground (to prevent freezing in cold weather) you will need this key.

Which way should one turn the key?
To turn the valve off – turn the key clockwise. One-quarter turn is usually all that’s necessary. To turn the valve on (when you return home) – turn the key counter clockwise. MAWA is not responsible for turning these valves either on or off. You are!

Where does one go to buy a key?
You might ask a board member the type key you need. Any welder can make a key for an older curb stop for about $50.00. New curb stops use keys made by A Y McDonald. They can be purchased from Salida Winnelson or Hi Valley Plumbing in Buena Vista. MAWA stocks a limited supply.

How difficult is it to turn the curb stop valve?
They should not be difficult to turn. However, older homes generally have older valves that might not have been turned in many years. If you find it difficult to turn the valve it might be “frozen” in an open position. If you find it impossible to turn the valve it might be time to replace it. Even that expense is cheap in comparison to a flooded house, and MAWA will share in the replacement cost.
TO WINTERIZE YOUR HOME WITH EITHER ELECTRIC OR FORCED AIR HEAT

Items Needed:

1. Propylene Glycol - DO NOT USE ETHYLENE GLYCOL – IT IS POISONOUS!!
2. A small cup to remove most or all the water from toilet bowls.

Procedure:

1. Turn off the curb stop. The next best alternative is to close the shut off valve in your home
2. Open all faucets
3. Flush all toilets and remove most of the water from the bowl
4. Place 2 cups Propylene Glycol in dishwasher, washing machine, all toilet water tanks and bowls, all sink drains OR wherever water is used and there is a drainage trap

WINTERIZING HOMES WITH HOT WATER HEAT

Winterizing homes with hot water heat is more complicated we cannot offer any general directions. Each such home is a special case, because no two systems are exactly the same. So we suggest that you seek advice from the plumbing and/or heating contractor that installed the system. If you have purchased an existing home the name of the installer is usually identified on the boiler. Or you might want to contact the former owner.

Revised by jcc 08.28.07