

Council Policy No.:	CP2025-005
Council Policy Name:	Level of Service Policy – Water and Wastewater
Date Approved by Council:	November 18, 2025 CW2025-184/CR2025-423
Date revision approved by Council:	
Related SOP, Management Directive, Council Policy, Forms	Frozen Services Management Directive Frozen Services SOP Frozen Services Form Water and Wastewater – Sewer Backup Management Directive

Policy Statement and Rationale:

It is the objective of the Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes to apply its operational and administrative activities in an efficient and effective way so as to provide safe, reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment to all City residents, visitors and businesses. Service excellence is a City of Kawartha Lakes core value and long-standing source of pride across the corporation. Our employees are committed to remaining service-focused and responsive to the needs of the community. The purpose of this policy will be to achieve the levels of service as defined herein and in no case shall the levels of service be permitted to fall below the minimum legislative requirements.

Scope:

Inherent within this Service Policy is the expectation that all Staff and contracted services will act responsibly and with due diligence at all times in the production of safe, reliable drinking water and the efficient treatment of wastewater.

This policy only applies to properties that are serviced by municipal water and/or wastewater and are located within the City of Kawartha Lakes' municipal boundaries. The standard applies to any customer including:

- Property owners with water and/or wastewater connections or access to municipal infrastructure; and
- Persons who use our services (residents, tenants, the general community and visitors).

This policy will not apply during periods of declared natural emergencies until as soon as practicable after the affected normal services have been restored. During an emergency or natural disaster, the operating authority will endeavor to maintain services and infrastructure and respond to incidents as soon as possible depending on the availability of resources and the severity of the event.

It is the focus of the City of Kawartha Lakes to, when possible, meet all designated service levels and, where feasible, exceed the expectations of all customers. Further, this policy ensures that the City of Kawartha Lakes continues to provide services that are consistent, professional and coordinated so that customers are satisfied at the first point of contact.

Definitions:

“As soon as practicable” shall mean without undue delay.

“Competent” shall mean having the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something successfully.

“Emergency” shall mean any event which human and/or environmental health is affected or an incident resulting in an interruption of potable water supply or impairment of the quality of potable water or disruption of wastewater services.

“Freeze Prevention” shall refer to the procedure/steps to follow in order to help avoid frozen services.

“Operating Authority” shall refer to the accredited operator of the drinking water and wastewater systems.

“Owner” shall mean the owner of the building of the property being serviced as well as a person who has any right, title, estate, or interest in a property, other than that of only an occupant and, where that person is a corporation, shall include the officers, directors and shareholders of that corporation, and shall include a developer of property and any person with authority or power over or control of that property on behalf of an owner.

“Preventative maintenance” shall mean the practice of regularly servicing equipment on a pre-determined schedule.

“Response” shall mean the initiation of action towards resolution (i.e. communication with a resident, investigation into an after hours alarm, etc.).

“Resolution” shall mean the solving of an issue/service interruption, etc.

“Service” can be defined in two contexts. In the larger context, any government activity is a service. For instance, a potable water supply is a service. When used in the context of these standards, “service” refers more specifically to aspects of drinking water production and delivery and wastewater solutions. Services are seen from the perspective of the user.

Policy, Procedure and Implementation:

Process: for the purposes of this policy, levels of service have been categorized as follows:

- **Customer Complaints/Call-Outs** – categorized further into Emergency and Non-Emergency Events.
- **Frozen Services** – categorized into Owner Responsibility and City Responsibility.
- **Alarm Response** – categorized further into Emergency and Non-Emergency Events.
- **Service Interruptions** – categorized further into Planned and Unplanned Events.
- **Preventative Maintenance** – not resulting in service interruption.
- **Safe Competency**
- **Water Quality**
- **Sewer Backups.**

1.0 Customer Complaints/Call-Outs/General Inquiry

1.1 Non-Emergency Complaints/Call-Outs/General Inquiry – includes call-outs, service requests and complaints received during normal work hours and after hours.

- Upon notification, the Operating Authority will communicate/respond to all non-emergency complaints/call-outs/general inquiries within one business day under normal circumstances.
- An investigation will be made, in all possible instances within two to three business days.
- Resolution will be made as soon as possible. Depending upon the nature of the call, the problem may be resolved on the initial response or resolution may require additional time.

1.2 Emergency Complaints/Call-Outs – includes emergency call-outs and complaints received during normal work hours and after hours.

- Upon notification, the Operating Authority will communicate/respond to emergency complaints/call-outs within sixty minutes.
- An investigation will be made. Time of said investigation will depend upon the nature of the emergency:

Level 1 Emergency – generally those that can be addressed by the Operating Authority's own resources and do not require notification beyond that dictated in Ontario Regulation 170/03, Schedule 16 or the Ontario Water Resources Act (OWRA). Level 1 Emergencies can usually be solved by following Standard Operating Procedures.

Examples of Level 1 Emergency: minor sewer backup, response to an internal alarm, first aid incident, small onsite spill, or a process upset that can be easily brought under control.

Level 2 Emergency - higher level emergency but can generally still be addressed by the Operating Authority's own resources and does not require notification beyond that dictated in Ontario Regulation 170/03, Schedule 16 or the Ontario Water Resources Act (OWRA).

Examples of Level 2 Emergency: minor basement flooding, injury to staff that requires medical attention or a spill that causes, or is likely to cause localized, off-site adverse effects. If an event reaches this level, the instructions must indicate the need to contact the appropriate Supervisor.

Note: It is possible for an event to initially be classified as a Level 1 or 2 but continuing circumstances could elevate it to a Level 3 Event.

Level 3 Emergency – highest level emergency – cannot be addressed by the Operating Authority's own resources. Requires assistance from outside work forces (i.e. regulators, emergency responders). Notification beyond Ontario Regulation 170/03, Schedule 16 is required including contacting the Corporate Response Team as referenced in the City of Kawartha Lakes Emergency Response Plan.

Examples of Level 3 Emergency: Explosion/fire, prolonged power failure, extreme equipment failure, large spill or spill that threatens human health, the source water or the environment, critical injury including loss of life, breach of security that is a threat to public health, community emergency affecting the water supply/treatment, declared pandemic, catastrophic failure (from any cause) that could impact public health or the environment, or cause significant property damage. Level 3 emergencies require an effective operations response and effective issues management.

- Resolution for all emergency events will be made as soon as possible under normal circumstances.

2.0 Frozen Services

- 2.1 The Owner of any commercial, industrial, institutional or residential property shall keep in good repair and be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the water services on the private portion of the property (between the residence/building and the property line).
- 2.2 The City will ensure that instruction for residents regarding frozen services is kept up to date on the City website. This will include information regarding the seasonal voluntary freeze prevention program, a series of tips for homeowners to avoid the freezing of their water services which will be provided in the late fall of each year.

Residents will be encouraged to take the following actions:

- Ensure that their plumbing and drains will accommodate continuous, unattended running of water.
 - Begin running their water when advised, in order to prevent pipes from freezing (there will be no adjustments to water bills for additional water usage due to running of taps).
 - Notify the City as soon as possible when an interruption in water supply occurs.
- 2.3 Customer service requests will be made on a “first come, first served” basis.
 - 2.4 Staff shall adhere to the operational processes to address the frozen services as defined within the Management Directive and associated Standard Operating Procedures. The Management Directive shall define responsibilities of the City and the public and will also define accountability and respective costs.

Note: In emergency situations, the City may offer extended service through stand-by operators. Response efforts to service requests from vulnerable customers may be accelerated.

3.0 Sewer Backups

- 3.1 The Owner of any commercial, industrial, institutional or residential property shall keep in good repair and be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the sanitary sewer service on the private portion of the property (between the residence/building and the property line). A property owner will also be responsible for protecting municipal infrastructure from damage or failure due to

misuse such as pouring grease/other foreign material down the drain. The property owner is responsible for the cost of repairs and clearing any blockages determined to be the result of the owner's misuse even if the blockage/material has travelled from the private portion of the service to the City's side of the service/sewer main.

- 3.2 The City will ensure that instructions for residents regarding sewer backups is kept up to date on the City website. This will include information regarding the procedure to follow when experiencing a sewer backup, a series of tips for homeowners to avoid sewer backups and a list of City Approved plumbers.

Residents will be encouraged to take the following steps if experiencing a sewer backup:

- Report sewer backup to the City first
- Hire a City Approved plumber to determine the location of the blockage whether on the City side (property line to main within street) or Owner's side (inside of property line).
- Have plumber call City prior to commencing work – they will be advised they must provide video documentation if blockage is determined to be on the City's side. If no video documentation is provided the City will assume no responsibility for costs incurred.
 - If blockage is located on the Owner's side, they are responsible for all costs associated with the sewer backup.
 - If blockage is located on the City's side, and plumber provides video documentation to prove location and cause, the City is responsible for all associated costs of the sewer backup.
 - If blockage is located on the City's side, but is due to the misuse of system, the Owner is responsible for all associated costs of the sewer backup.

Note: Only City Approved plumbers are able to perform work on the City's infrastructure.

- 3.3 Customer service requests will be made on a "first come, first served" basis, however when possible vulnerable customers will be accelerated.
- 3.4 Staff shall adhere to the operational processes to address the sewer backup as defined within the Management Directive and associated Standard Operating Procedures. The Management Directive shall define responsibilities of the City and the public and will also define accountability and responsibility for costs.

4.0 Alarm Response

4.1 Non-Emergency Alarms

- The Operating Authority will respond to non-emergency alarms as soon as possible within a two-hour response time under normal circumstances. (For alarms received after normal working hours, response includes the initial investigation into the cause of an alarm.)
- Resolution time will depend on the nature of the alarm.

4.2 Emergency Alarms – categorized as events that generate an immediate threat to the public and/or the environment, or an incident that results in an interruption of potable water supply or impairment of the quality of potable water.

- The Operating Authority will respond to all emergency alarms within one hour under normal circumstances. (For alarms received after normal working hours, response includes the initial investigation into the cause of the alarm.)
- Resolution time will depend upon the nature of the alarm although there is the expectation that the Operating Authority will resolve all emergency issues as soon as possible.

Potential critical alarms could include:

General: intrusion, power failure, loss of communication, chemical leak (i.e. sodium hypo, alum, etc.)

Water System: low/high chlorine residual, high turbidity, low distribution system pressure, low/high tower level.

Wastewater System: low/high wet well, blower failure/low dissolved oxygen (DO), bypassing (high flows), and disinfection failure.

5.0 Service Interruptions

5.1 Planned Service Interruptions – usually the result of required equipment repair, infrastructure maintenance, construction, etc.

- The Operating Authority will ensure that all planned service interruptions are resolved as soon as possible. Resolution will depend on the complexity of the work being completed.
- Under normal circumstances, notice for all planned service interruptions (via individual hand delivered notices as well as the City website and

social media when required), will be provided a minimum of twenty-four hours prior to work commencing.

5.2 Unplanned Service Interruptions – usually required in the event of an emergency event including but not limited to: accidents, mainbreaks and urgent equipment/infrastructure repair.

- The Operating Authority will ensure that all unplanned service interruptions are resolved as soon as possible. Resolution will depend on the complexity of the work being completed. The Operating Authority will do its best to communicate the issues with residents, however in emergency events this may not always be feasible. Should the event last longer than anticipated, further communication with residents will be initiated.

6.0 Preventative Maintenance/Inspections – not resulting in service interruptions.

Preventative maintenance includes but is not limited to: flushing, fire flow testing, alarm testing, equipment calibration, equipment inspection and/or repair etc. For equipment, preventative maintenance (including inspection), is conducted as per legislation or as per manufacturer specifications, whichever is more frequent.

Preventative maintenance is essential to ensure all infrastructure and equipment related to the production of safe drinking water and the treatment of wastewater is in good working condition.

Inspections of facilities will be completed at a frequency which complies with applicable laws and regulations.

7.0 Staff Competency

The Operating Authority will ensure that all staff are trained and licensed as per mandated legislation and regulation. The Operating Authority will ensure that at all times, there are adequate numbers of competent staff available to work in the system.

8.0 Water Quality – includes but is not limited to: sampling testing and monitoring inspections, operational checks, treatment and reporting.

The Operating Authority will continue to ensure that all sampling, testing and monitoring is completed according to mandated legislation and regulations and that compliance with regards to drinking water and wastewater effluent criteria requirements is achieved 100% of the time.

9.0 Management Expectations

Management is responsible for applying the following principles to achieve increased efficiency in the development and delivery of water and wastewater services:

- Client Service – Services are designed and delivered with the consideration of client needs and client feedback.
- Operational Efficiency – Services are designed and delivered in a cost-effective manner, considering opportunities for standardization and integration of service across the City.
- Culture of Service Management Excellence - services are designed and delivered based on strong management practices.
- To ensure priority services are reviewed regularly to identify opportunities for services redesign, improved use-ability, channel integration and mobile optimization and, where appropriate, adopt best-in-class service delivery approaches, alternative service delivery mechanisms and partnership arrangements.
- Management and Reporting Requirements – Management is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy within their department and taking corrective action as needed; establishing a framework for the review of this policy.
- Management is responsible for investigating and acting when issues arise regarding policy compliance. Management is also responsible for ensuring the appropriate remedial actions are taken to address those issues within the department (i.e. review or audit, corrective actions.)
- Management is responsible for providing policy advice and guidance and for communicating with and engaging departments on the plan, progress, risks and challenges associates with implementing this policy and related instruments.

10.0 Expected Results: The expected results of this policy are: better service experiences for the clients, the continued delivery of safe, reliable drinking water, the efficient treatment of wastewater and more efficient and budget-conscious services.

Revision History:

Proposed Date of Review:

Revision	Date	Description of Changes	Requested By
1	11/18/2025	Approved to replace Policy CP2021-006	