



Public Service Announcement

Prevent Frozen Plumbing Vents and Sewer Backups

April 2, 2026 – Iqaluit, Nunavut

The City of Iqaluit would like to advise residents of an issue that occurs regularly in our community during cold weather: frozen plumbing vent pipes. This issue is most common during periods of extreme cold.

Plumbing vents are pipes that extend outside your home and allow air to flow through your plumbing system. These pipes are typically located on the roof or exterior of your home. Warm air from inside the home can freeze when it reaches the cold outdoor vent, causing ice buildup over time. When vents become blocked with frost or ice, airflow is restricted, which can lead to frozen sewer lines or sewage backups. This can affect all homes, including both utilidor and trucked services.

Blocked vents can also cause plumbing traps (P-traps) to lose their water seal, allowing sewer odours to enter the home. In some cases, this may lead to mild symptoms such as headaches or nausea. If not addressed, it may result in sewage backups inside the home and potential property damage.

What to watch for:

Residents should watch for signs such as slow draining sinks, tubs, or toilets, gurgling sounds from drains, unpleasant sewer odors, or frequent plumbing backups. Please see the images below for examples of what to look for.

Prevention and basic maintenance:

To help prevent issues, residents are encouraged to:

- Periodically check exterior vent pipes for visible frost or ice buildup and safely clear them where accessible (for example, from ground level)
- Avoid climbing onto roofs or taking unsafe actions to clear vents

