

## EcoCheck

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### How to Thaw Out a Frozen STEP System

**Precautionary Note:** Homeowners that attempt to thaw a frozen STEP system need to be aware of the dangers of electricity and water in the vault. If a homeowner elects to do the work themselves, they assume all responsibility for the work they perform. If the homeowner is uncomfortable with this work, they should contact EcoCheck to perform a service call. This guide is intended to be used by those homeowners who wish to do work on their privately owned systems and are comfortable with the risks involved.

*It is possible that some alarms that appear to be frozen systems could be another issue (like a broken pipe, tripped breaker, failed pump, etc). If following the procedure below does not correct the alarm in a 4 hour time period, a qualified service technician should be dispatched.*

#### How to Tell You Have a Frozen System

The control panel in your yard will call out to the service provider (EcoCheck) indicating an alarm condition. In some cases, a short term alarm gets resolved. However if the alarm calls in 3 times in a 2 hour period, this indicates a potential freezing condition. At this point, a service provider will contact you at home (between the hours of 8AM -8PM) and let you know of the issue. If you are not home, EcoCheck will provide a 4-8 hour window of time for you to call back. If no call is received, a service provider will make a site visit and attempt to correct the issue during normal working hours.

If you do not have an active phone line or if there is a panel malfunction, the audible alarm on the control panel will sound. If this occurs, you should contact EcoCheck at 651-257-3511 or 651-491-6772. If no answer, refer to the contact numbers on the Township website.

#### Step by Step Instructions for Thawing a Frozen STEP System

Below are basic step by step instructions for homeowners:

1. String an electrical cord from an outdoor outlet to the control panel manhole cover. Make sure the GFI on the outlet is not tripped and is operational.



Manhole furthest from the home near the control panel has piping that may become frozen. String an extension cord to this location. Remove the screws with an adjustable wrench.

2. Remove manhole cover. Inside of the manhole may look similar to what is shown below. If a green pouch is in the manhole, you may temporarily remove it. You should be hearing the pump running.



Piping should be visible. If you do not see this equipment, you are not in the correct manhole.

3. Place a trouble light (a brooding lamp is shown) immediately below the red handled ball valve. A 60-100 watt standard light bulb will work. Water should not be spraying in the manhole itself. If it is, call EcoCheck (it may be a drainback hole and the pump breaker may need to be temporarily turned off).



4. Place manhole cover back on and lightly secure. This will trap the heat and encourage the pipes to thaw. This process could take 10 minutes – 4 hours depending upon the amount of heat provided by the light source.
5. If the frozen pipe releases, EcoCheck will get the notification and will call the homeowner when it occurs. If the homeowner responded to an audible alarm and silenced it, they can see if the pump has turned off. If so, it indicates the tank pumped down and the frozen plug has been removed. The water should be at an elevation where two floats can be seen inside the bigger opening in the plastic insert (where the U-shaped white pipe connects to).

If this has happened, you may remove the light and cord, secure the manhole cover and all work is complete. Please follow up with EcoCheck to let them know you have resolved the issue. This will help us track of possible recurring issues.