

2020 Water Main Replacement

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Town coming into my neighborhood to replace or rehabilitate the water pipes?

The project scheduled for your neighborhood is part of the Town's program to upgrade the water system. Many of the Town's pipes are older and have been scheduled for replacement because of their age, a history of leaks, breaks or other problems. The larger water pipes that serve streets are called mains. Smaller water pipes that extend from the main to each house are called services. On Avon Road, the existing water main pipe is 6-inches in diameter and are being replaced with 8-inch diameter water main pipes that meet current standards.

Where are the water mains being installed?

The water mains will be installed in close proximity to the old main. Due to the nature of the work, this will require shutting off the old water main and installing a temporary, above-ground system of pipes and hoses (called the by-pass) to continue to provide water and fire service to the neighborhood.

My water is too hot or too cold. What do I do?

Because the temporary by-pass is above-ground, it is more susceptible to temperature fluctuations. You should be able to resolve temperature issues by running a faucet to flush the line. You are not charged for water usage while connected to the by-pass.

Will my water service line be replaced?

As part of the project, each water service is replaced from the water main to the shutoff box near the back of the sidewalk. This section constitutes the Town's portion of the water service. The section of water service from the shutoff box into the house is the responsibility of the owner. We recommend the owner review the condition of the water service to determine if replacement is desired. New water service lines are installed using copper pipe. We recommend that any private side water services that are a material other than copper (such as iron) be upgraded.

Will residents be notified before the contractor begins work?

The town will notify residents prior to the contractor mobilizing to begin work. The Town will provide notices at least 48-hours prior to work beginning and updates at important milestones. Any impacts to roadway or driveway access will be noted. Notices are provided using hang-tabs attached to front doors.

Will my water service be disrupted?

Planned Events: The Town provides 48-hour advance notice and works to minimize the length of all planned water shut downs required to install new water mains. Water service may be disrupted for 4-6 hours or longer if unforeseen issues arise.

Emergency Events: Unexpected breaks can occur requiring the system to be shut down for repair. The length of time needed to repair the line and resume water service varies depending on the severity of the damage. As always, crews will do everything they can to make the needed repairs and return water service to you as soon as possible.

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Water Service Connection: When it's time to switch from the old water meter to the new water meter, we will temporarily shut off the water to your home. This process typically takes 2-4 hours under normal circumstances. See the typical water main installation process for additional information.

Will my water pressure change as a result of this work?

The water pressure in the area should be about the same after the work is complete.

I came home at the end of the day and my water is discolored and/or I have reduced pressure. What should I do?

Occasionally, work can dislodge sediment in the distribution system that causes discoloration or reduced pressure. Although the water is safe to drink, please avoid drinking if it is discolored. We recommend that you run your kitchen or bathtub cold water on and let it run until it is clear (may take a up to 10 to 15 minutes). If this does not resolve the issue, call the Department of Public Works at 617-972-6420 for further assistance.

What are work hours for the construction crew?

Typical work hours will be 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM Monday to Friday. Weekend work is not anticipated, but you will be notified if special conditions require weekend work. During emergency events, work will continue until the emergency is resolved. Typically, construction work completed during a normal eight-hour shift will be backfilled (covered) and ready for traffic by the end of the shift. Open trenches will be covered by large metal plates secured in place with an asphalt mixture.

Where will the tractors and other equipment be parked during non-working hours?

A Town-hired private contractor typically makes arrangements with owners of private property to use a vacant lot as a staging area to store equipment and materials during construction. Certain equipment and small amounts of materials such as pipe, sand and gravel may be stored temporarily on streets near the project. In most cases, the equipment and stockpiles of materials will move along as the construction project moves along.

Can I park my car on the street?

Unless there is a no parking sign posted, you may park your vehicle on the street as you would under normal circumstances.

Will I lose access to my driveway during construction?

There will be a period of time when your driveway will not be accessible (i.e. when work is occurring in front of the driveway apron). The contractor will provide notification of such times so that you will be able to exit the driveway before work is performed. Every effort will be made to minimize the impact to the regular use of your driveway.

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In the event of an emergency will police cars, fire trucks and ambulances be able to get to my home during construction?

Yes. The Police and Fire Departments are notified of road closures, though access is maintained for emergency vehicles. In the event of an emergency, the contractor will assist emergency vehicles as needed to provide access to all buildings and residences. Temporary fire hydrants are kept in service during construction in the event of an emergency.

Will public services such as trash collection be completed during construction?

The construction project is not anticipated to impact trash and recycling collection or yard waste pick up services.

I have not seen any work being completed for several days but the improvements do not appear to be completed. Has work stopped?

No. The Contractor often is working on several streets at one time and certain tasks are performed by specialized crews. Depending on the project schedules, resources may be allocated to another street for a period of time. Certain tasks, such as water main chlorination and testing, require

My yard has been damaged during construction. Who will repair the damage?

You can report damage to DPW at dpwdept@watertown-ma.gov. The contractor takes detailed photos of the work area and adjacent property before construction begins. These pre-condition photos are used to determine if the contractor is responsible for damage. We recommend that you take photos of any areas of concern to document existing conditions as well.

Please note: Repair of damage is typically completed at the end of the project.

Why does the Town and its contractors flush water pipelines?

Water flushing is necessary for the disinfection of new water mains and recently repaired water mains. Due to health reasons, super-chlorinated water, which is used to disinfect the new or repaired pipelines, cannot be delivered directly to customers and therefore needs to be de-chlorinated and flushed out of the system before being discharged to the environment. Flushing is also required to resolve water quality issues in the water distribution system due to stagnated water, potential contamination, removal of bio-film and sedimentation, and dirty water complaints from customers due to sediments and corrosion residues in the pipes.

Will my street be repaired when the project is finished?

All trenches, sidewalk panels, and planting strips impacted as part of the work will be repaired at the end of the job.

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

Contact the Department of Public Works Water Division at 617-972-6420.