

What is a water main break?

A water main is an underground pipe that delivers water to the customer's service pipe. In residential areas it usually runs under the street. If a hole or crack develops in the pipe, the water will typically find its way to the surface. Because the water main is under pressure, water will continue to flow until the break is repaired.

How much notice will homeowners receive if their water needs to be turned off?

If water needs to be turned off for a water main break, homeowners will receive little or no notice. The water can flood streets and private property causing damage and safety hazards, and must be controlled as quickly as possible.

Will customers notice anything different about their water after a water main break?

After a water main break, customers may notice brown or cloudy water coming from their tap. If so, they should not use appliances or drink the water until it runs clear.

How many miles of water mains are there?

Manheim Borough Authority has over 33 miles of water mains. About 90 percent, of mains are cast and ductile iron. Manheim has cast iron pipes still in service that was installed prior to 1940, located in older sections of town. The design life for cast iron pipe is 75 - 100 years.

What causes water main breaks?

Water main breaks usually result from external corrosion of the pipe. Manheim soil is highly conductive and corrodes the metallic pipe from the outside in. Changing soil conditions can then cause the weakened pipe to break.

Does cold weather cause more water main breaks?

Water main breaks are more likely to occur when frost penetrates deep into the ground, to a level of 3-5 feet, usually from late January until early April. While cold temperatures may send the frost deeper, the level of snow cover is also important. Snow will act as a "blanket" insulating the ground. In years when there is plenty of snow, the frost does not go as deep.

How many water main breaks happen in Manheim annually?

We have been able to reduce water main breaks by replacing and repairing corroded mains with new Ductile Iron Concrete Lined pipe (DICL), and by reducing the rate of corrosion by using a sequestering protection in our water. We now have only 12 breaks a year.

How are they repaired?

First we control the water by closing valves. Then we contact other utilities (PA one call system Call 811) to make sure we can dig without damaging other services or endangering staff or the public. We find the leak using an electronic leak detector, and then dig down to the pipe. Depending on the type of failure, we may apply a repair clamp or replace a length of pipe.

How do we determine which breaks to repair first on any given day?

We first repair breaks that could cause the most damage or hardship. Breaks which affect a large number of people (e.g., apartment blocks), or institutions (e.g., hospitals, personal care homes, schools), or traffic on major roads will be at the top of the list.

How much does it cost to repair an average water main break?

It costs about \$4,000 to repair the average break.

Who should you call to report a water main break?

Contact 717-665-2737