TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-105 Water Main Break

Emergency Manual

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Policy/Procedure

When there is a water main break, there will be two notifications to Dispatch by the Water Department.

1. First Notification: The first call will be the initial notification of a main break. The Water Emergency Crew will have responded and verified that an actual break has occurred. At this time they will begin to isolate the main that has broken.

1. If a repair crew is not available, no work will begin immediately. The fact that a broken main is not being repaired immediately should have little affect on our ability to utilize hydrants and we should have no major problems with hydrants in the area. A conference call to all companies in the affected battalions shall be made notifying them of the break. If there is a fire in that area prior to the second notification, hydrants with the closest proximity to the fire shall be tested prior to using. If tested and water is available, the hydrant can be utilized. If the closest hydrant is found to be inoperable or has a reduced volume of water, the next closest hydrant shall be tested until a working hydrant is located and secured. Command shall consider requesting an additional engine to respond to the scene, if necessary. Command shall notify responding engines of the problems in the area.

2. If a water repair crew is immediately available to repair the main, the procedure outlined under “Second Notification” shall be followed.

2. Second Notification: After the Water Department Emergency Crew completes the shut down process, they will notify Dispatch. At this time the following shall occur:

1. The respective Battalion Chief shall be notified of the problem and informed that an engine crew is responding to that area to ascertain the availability of water.

2. Dispatch shall notify the officer of the area's first due Engine Company of the problem. That officer shall, with his or her crew, immediately respond "in service" to the area of the main break and discuss the availability of water in the area with the Water Department Emergency Crew or foreman. Each hydrant in the area shall be opened and tested to determine its availability.

3. When checking hydrants to determine if they are in or out of service, crews shall begin in the area closest to the main break. Hydrants that are found to be out-of-service shall have a plastic shopping bag secured to the bonnet with scene tape. As hydrants are tested moving away from the break site, the process will continue until all of the affected out-of-service hydrants are located and identified in this fashion.

    - Note: This procedure should not be confused with the application of orange "Frisbees" to hydrants. Orange Frisbees indicate broken hydrants – not hydrants out of service due to water main breaks. The Water Department has specified this distinction.

4. When this process is complete, crews will have identified all the out of service hydrants in the affected district. If a fire occurs in the area prior to the water main being repaired, Engine officers shall be able to identify the closest "good" hydrants.

3. If a crew is dispatched to a run during this process, interrupting the identification of out-of-service hydrants, Dispatch shall send the next closest engine to begin or continue the survey.

4. Upon returning to quarters, the officer shall immediately contact Dispatch via fire phone and provide them with a list of the out-of-service fire hydrants. The officer shall also notify his or her respective Battalion Chief, explaining the scope of the problem, the available hydrants, and the expected duration of the problem.

5. Dispatch will notify the first due Engine Company when the main is repaired. At the earliest convenience the engine crew shall report to the area, assure that all plastic bags are removed from the hydrants, and test all hydrants that were out of service to ensure they do indeed provide water. A cap shall be removed and the hydrant turned on until water flows from the discharge port. Once the hydrant is tested and found to be operable, the hydrant shall be shut down, pumped, if necessary and the cap put back on.

6. All actions SHALL be noted in the company journal.

Note: Most main breaks are repaired in less than 12 hours.

See Also:

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