

The Mainstream

A semiannual newsletter dedicated to enhancing water and wastewater services brought to you by
The Ypsilanti Community Utilities Authority



From The Director

As the spring thaw begins, homeowners and renters are advised to inspect pipes that have been vulnerable to this winter's frigid conditions.

Outside spigot piping that is visible just inside the exterior wall is the most susceptible to freezing, which may go unnoticed if not visually and manually inspected. If you can observe that the pipe has expanded, feel it with your hand. If you see or feel a bubble or crack in the pipe, make sure the water is off to this area and then have it repaired. This is normally an inexpensive repair compared to the damage that could be caused.

On a frost-free-type outside spigot, the homeowner will not realize damage has occurred until the water is turned on from the outside. Then water can leak or spray on the inside of the

home causing damage, normally in the basement or crawl space.

Homeowners with sump pumps are advised to make sure their pumps and discharge piping are in working condition. As the snow starts to melt, it's necessary for the sump pump to do its job and pump the ground water to the storm sewer or ditch line. Pumping ground water to the sanitary sewer is prohibited.

If you observe that your sump pump is not working and the sump well is full, problems could occur because the ground water has nowhere to go but through multiple areas of your basement walls near the floor, causing flooring or carpet damage.

- YCUA Director

YCUA's Cross-Connection Control Program

This spring and summer, YCUA will be conducting residential cross-connection surveys. A cross-connection involves an arrangement of piping or appurtenances through which backflow of non-potable water could flow into the public drinking water. An example is the common garden hose submerged in a swimming pool or a bucket of detergent or other sources that would contaminate the water supply. When the proper conditions occur, water can backflow into the drinking water through a cross-connection. The two ways that contaminated water can backflow into the drinking water are back-siphonage and backpressure.

As required under the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act, 1976 PA 399 and the Michigan Plumbing Code, it is the responsibility of the water utility to implement a cross-connection program, the purpose of which is to help protect public health by preventing pollution and / or contamination of the drinking water delivered to a home or business.

Residential accounts in the YCUA service area will be surveyed by a Meter Service Technician and are done on external water spigots and irrigation systems only. A letter is sent only if there is a non-compliance issue. A follow up survey is made to ensure that non-compliance issues have been resolved.

Cross-connection surveys will take place between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. For more information, please go to: www.ycua.org, click on Residential Users, and then click on Cross-Connection and Backflow Prevention. Or, you can call 734-484-4600 ext. 325.

YCUA's Valve Turning Exercise Program to Begin in June

Beginning in June, YCUA will be conducting a conventional valve turning exercise program to maintain the quality and longevity of all water system valves. Being able to operate these valves at a moment's notice is extremely important. In an emergency, sections of a distribution system may need to be shut down without delay.

Conventional water system valve turning consists of closing, then opening each valve in a specific neighborhood. During this process, you might experience discolored water and sediment for a short period of time.

After valve exercising has been completed in your neighborhood, it may be necessary to purge your internal plumbing. Running several cold taps at full force for a short period will usually flush out any discolored water in the home. If the water is not clear, wait one-half hour and repeat the process. Running water through an outdoor garden hose is also an effective way to flush out your service. It is also a good idea to remove and clean out the screens on faucet aerators, which may have gathered particles during the valve exercising process.

If you experience continued abnormally low pressure and / or low flow volume throughout your house, please call the number listed below. Valve exercising will normally take place from the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. For more information, please go to: www.ycua.org or call 734-484-4600 ext. 307.

YCUA Director Appointed to MDEQ Advisory Board of Examiners

In February, YCUA Director Jeff Castro was appointed to a three-year term on the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Advisory Board of Examiners. This board is responsible for the examination of all applicants for certification as drinking water treatment system and water distribution system operators in accordance with adopted regulations of the State of Michigan.

The selection of nine Board members is based upon their interest and experience in the drinking water treatment field in order to provide valuable input to the Board's responsibilities and activities.

The MDEQ promotes wise management of Michigan's air, land, and water resources to support a sustainable environment, healthy communities, and vibrant economy.

Water-Wise Tips For Your Spring Cleanup

Storm drains in our streets and yards empty directly into our lakes and streams. Fertilizer on our driveways and sidewalks washes directly to our lakes and streams polluting the water. Here are some simple lawn care tips for a great looking lawn that will also help protect our environment:

- ◆ Don't pour your unwanted chemicals on the ground or down sinks. Instead, take them to a hazardous waste collection center.
- ◆ It's important to use chemical fertilizers, weed killers, and fungicides only as directed. Do not apply these products if rain is expected or near surface waters.
- ◆ Fertilizer left on sidewalks and driveways easily washes into storm drains. Sweep it back onto the lawn.
- ◆ Don't hose your lawn clippings away – sweep them up instead.
- ◆ Don't fertilize until three weeks after green up in the spring.
- ◆ Consider a fertilizer spreader with a directional control that avoids non-lawn areas.
- ◆ Instead of spreading weed killer over your entire lawn, use a pre-mixed spot treatment, directed at the root of the problem.

Restoration Procedure for Road Excavations

YCUA frequently must excavate in roads, driveways, and / or sidewalks in order to maintain and repair water supply and wastewater pipes and associated infrastructure. Permanent restoration of the disturbed road, driveway, or sidewalk typically does not happen immediately following YCUA's work on the water supply or wastewater utilities.

There are two items that affect the timing of any paving restoration program. The first is the fact that the Michigan Department of Transportation, whose policies and procedures are almost universally accepted by all other road agencies in the state (including the City of Ypsilanti and the Washtenaw County Road Commission), dictates that asphalt paving can only occur in this region between May 5 and November 15 of any given year. The majority of road excavations, particularly those caused by failures in the water supply system, occur outside of the paving season limitations, which will inevitably result in a delay before permanent restoration can occur. The second item concerns compaction of the backfill material as it is placed in the excavation by YCUA staff. Due to a number of factors, particularly lack of control of the moisture content of the backfill material, it is prudent for the Authority to allow some time to lapse between the pavement disturbance and the permanent restoration to allow for some settlement of the backfill.

As soon as weather allows in early spring, YCUA crews complete concrete repairs that are not connected to a public road. This work is limited primarily to sidewalks, but occasionally includes sections of concrete driveways that do not abut a curb or road surface.

YCUA bids two road repair contracts each year. The first includes the repair of cuts made between June 1 and November 30 of the prior year with those pavement replacements typically being completed between May 1 and the Fourth of July holiday. The second contract includes the repair of cuts made between December 1 of the previous year and May 31 of the current year with those locations restored between September and November.

Did You Know?

YCUA's annual Consumer Confidence Drinking Water Quality Report will be mailed to you soon. After May 1, 2014, the new report will be viewable on our website at www.ycua.org/waterreport.pdf. Please call us at 734-484-4600 ext. 107 if you are unable to access the Internet and wish to continue having a paper copy of the report delivered to your home.