

Dear Dorset Water Company customer:

Many Dorset property owners who get their water from the Dorset Water Company do not know how water is delivered to their property, nor are they aware of their responsibilities under the Dorset Fire District Bylaws. This document is meant to provide some background information and to clarify what happens when leaks occur.

A Brief History

Construction of Dorset's water system began in 1911 and was completed the following year. Most of the properties on town water connected to the system during the first 20 years. Because of reservoir capacity, the Vermont Dept. of Health has prohibited new connections on the system since 1984.

Distribution System

The 100-year-old water mains, which are constructed of pig iron, are in remarkably good condition. Occasionally a joint gets disturbed by freezing or construction, but very little deterioration to the system's basic infrastructure has occurred. *Private service lines, which connect homes and businesses to the water mains, are another matter. Most of these service lines consist of galvanized steel, and many of them are in the process of failing, causing most of water leaks in the system.*

Reservoir

The system's reservoir is located 250 feet above Dorset village and is fed by a series of natural springs. The reservoir has enough capacity to satisfy the potable water needs of customers during normal periods, as well as times when rainfall is somewhat less than usual. However, Dorset has experienced prolonged periods of below-average precipitation. This was the case in the late summers of 2015 and 2016, and emergency conservation measures had to be implemented. These conditions have elevated the necessity of detecting and repairing leaks.

Responsibilities

One of the responsibilities of our Water Operator is to search for leaks, using available technology. If a leak is discovered on the system mains, the Water Operator contacts a contractor who excavates at the leak site and replaces any sections that are leaking. These repair expenses are paid by the Dorset Water Company.

Under the district bylaws, if a leak is discovered on a private service line, it is the responsibility of the property owner to have the leak repaired promptly. The repair may be made by any licensed contractor, but there are specifications for parts and materials (see attachment #1), and all repairs must be inspected by the Water Operator before the pipes can be reburied.

If the Water Operator is unable to reach the property owner in a timely manner, the district will hire a contractor to execute the necessary repairs. All expenses associated with these repairs, including sheriff's department traffic control and repaving of public road surfaces, will be billed to the property owner. In cases where a private service line is shared by more than one

property, the contractor apportions the expense appropriately to the various property owners. *If property owners do not pay for repairs to their private service lines, the water district has the right to shut off their water.*

Notifications

When performing repairs to the water system, the Dorset Water Company will make its best efforts to give water users 24-hour notice before turning off the water supply. In case of emergencies, this advanced notice is not always feasible. Notifications are sent in the form of an email broadcast, therefore we urge all water users to share their email addresses with us. You can share your email address by visiting our website, www.dorsetfiredistrict.org and clicking on the “Get Notified” button.

Information and Meetings

The district bylaws, contact information and other details are posted on the district’s website. The Prudential Committee’s meetings, which are held on the second Monday of each month, are open to the public. Please contact us if you have any questions about your water service. Contact information is available on our website.

Dorset Prudential Committee