WHY CAN A 6 to 8-INCH WATER MAIN BREAK TAKE 16–48 HOURS TO REPAIR?

When you see a water main break, it may look like a simple matter of “digging a hole and fixing a pipe.”

For a 6 to 8-inch water main buried approximately 10 feet underground, there are actually many steps involved. With only one person maintenance person:

Here’s what happens from start to finish:

⏱ 0–6 HOURS | ASSESS & ISOLATE

Our City maintenance man responds to the break, identifies the affected main and valves, determines which customers may be impacted, coordinates utility locating, and carefully shuts down and depressurizes the affected section.

⏱ 6-24 HOURS | EXCAVATE

Once the company that fixes our water line breaks arrives, they then establishes a safe work area and excavates approximately 10 feet down to expose enough of the 6 to 8-inch main to safely access and inspect the damaged section. This is often one of the most time-consuming parts of the process.

⏱ 6–8 HOURS | INSPECT & PREPARE

Once the pipe is exposed, the crew determines exactly what failed, removes the damaged section, measures the opening, and prepares the correct replacement pipe and fittings.

⏱ 8–12 HOURS | REPAIR THE MAIN

The damaged section is replaced, couplings and restraints are installed, and the repair is carefully inspected before the excavation is closed.

⏱ 12–14 HOURS | DISINFECT & PRESSURIZE

Because this is a drinking-water main, the repair must be properly disinfected. The main is then slowly placed back under pressure while crew and City maintenance person watches the repair for leaks.

⏱️ 14–16 HOURS | FLUSH & SAMPLE

The repaired section is flushed, and the required water-quality samples are collected according to the City ordinances and First District procedures and applicable requirements.

⏱️ 16–24 HOURS | RESTORE & COMPLETE

The City maintenance man completes the remaining restoration, returns valves and the water system to normal operation, communicates updates to affected customers, and completes the required documentation.

💝 WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG?

Our water system is operated by our City maintenance man. A major 6 to 8-inch main break requires excavation, specialized repair materials, water-system shutdowns, disinfection, flushing, water-quality procedures, inspection, restoration, and documentation. Not simply repairing the pipe itself.

That’s why an ETA update is almost impossible to give. The best we can offer is constant updates to where in the process we are.

A straightforward repair may take 48 hours, while difficult excavation, equipment availability, valve issues, additional damage, material availability, or other unexpected conditions can extend the process toward a few days or longer.

We understand that losing water is frustrating and disruptive. We don’t like it either 😭 As we only have one person that is our City maintenance person, it takes a little longer

as he has to contact the contractor and then co-ordinate with them to come out, assess and repair the damages. Then he has to make sure your drinking water remains safe. 💧

Thank you for your patience and understanding while our City maintenance man works to keep your water system operating safely and reliably. ♡