



The City of Lowell
Lowell Regional Water Utility
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TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
FROM: Mark A. Young, Executive Director
DATE: April 26, 2019
RE: Notice of Water Gate Exercise Program

The Lowell Water Utility is initiating a program to exercise water main valves throughout the city. This is a preventative maintenance program that is vital to the quality of Lowell's drinking water, as well as maintaining our ability to regulate the flow of water throughout Lowell's water distribution system.

Taking a systematic approach to exercising all water valves throughout the system not only helps ensure that the valves are functional, but also provides useful information about the overall condition of the system. In the event of a water main break, it is crucial to be able to locate and operate these valves at a moment's notice.

However, exercising of valves on water mains can cause the unintended consequence of disturbing the flow of water in a pipe, particularly when the valves haven't been operated for a long period of time. This disruption in the water flow can stir up particulate matter that has settled in the pipes (sediment).

As a result, gate exercising can cause temporary discoloration in the drinking water that is delivered to customers in the immediate vicinity of the work. This discoloration is not dangerous and is removed by simply running the water from the faucet until it is clear. Nevertheless, discolored water can alarm affected water users, especially when they are unaware of the cause of this discoloration.

During the upcoming valve exercising program, the Water Utility will inform all affected residents and businesses about the program. In order to achieve this, the Water Utility plans on utilizing multiple media platforms to communicate with the public, including road signage and local radio broadcasts. Additionally, we plan to use digital formats such as social media outreach to quickly disseminate information to affected neighborhoods.

I want to alert you to the potential concerns of the public and ensure you that we are taking steps to minimize these concerns. Please let me know if you have any questions about this vital program.