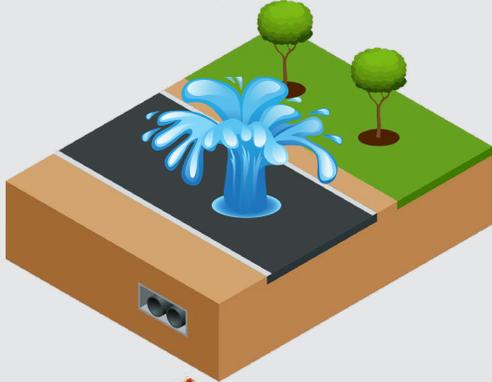


# How do water main breaks happen?

Main breaks happen due to various reasons and are a normal part of operating a water utility. Temperature changes or overly dry or wet weather can cause the ground to shift. This results in breaks to the water main pipes. The age of the main or sudden fluctuations in the pressure may also cause a break. Older pipes may break due to corrosion. Main breaks are more frequent in the winter time due to frost in the ground.

Main breaks are unpredictable, but when they happen, the water utility considers it their top priority to restore service.



## How will I notice a broken water main?

You may notice reduced pressure and/or volume when you turn on the shower or faucet in your home. A water main break will result in water leakage which may cause running or pooling water in the street.



## How long does it take to repair a water main?

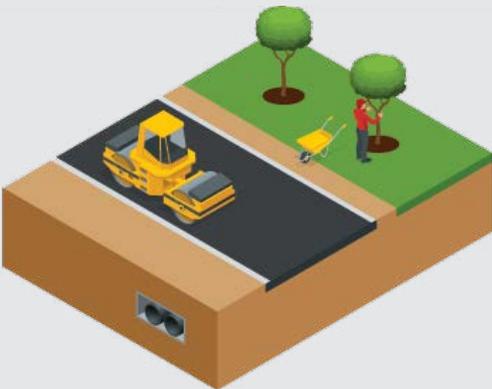
It can take anywhere from a few hours to a few days to have a water main break completely repaired. The amount of time it takes to fix a water main depends on the size of the break, where the break is located, and what type of environment it is in.

Water mains are generally repaired and completed between four to eight hours. One factor that may delay the repair is location of the break. A water main that is buried deep inside the earth or under another utility will take much longer.



## What do crews do to fix a water main?

The utility crews isolate the pipe by shutting off valves and temporarily placing the water supply out-of-service for the time it takes to make the repairs. After the repairs or replacement of the broken pipe is made, it is flushed prior to connecting it to the system.



## What to expect after the crews have gone

After a main is repaired, reddish discoloration may be seen in the water caused by small amounts of iron compounds flushing out of the system. You can get rid of the discoloration by running cold water for a few minutes through a tap without an aerator, such as the basement washtub or outside spigot.

## What do I do if I see a water main break?

If you see a water main break you can use the City's Online Help System at [www.westalliswi.gov/letushelp](http://www.westalliswi.gov/letushelp) or contact the City of West Allis Municipal Water Utility at 414-302-8830.