

# Responding to a Water Emergency

When there is a loss of water, the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) will respond to restore water services as safely and quickly as possible. Here is what we do:

**1. Get the call:** When you report a water emergency to our Water Emergency Hotline at (215) 685-6300, the hotline operator will collect information such as: name, phone number, location and description of the emergency.

**2. On the scene:** Our Emergency Crews investigate the problem, identify the source of the leak, and take steps to ensure the public's safety. **If the leak is on the homeowner's water service pipe, we will notify them that the leak must be repaired. (See assistance programs at the end of the brochure.)**

*If the leak is on PWD's water main, we will arrange to have utilities marked and take steps to protect the public's safety. We may shut down the water to isolate the emergency. Specialized crews assist with the shutdown of large water main breaks. We then do the following:*

**3. Make repairs:** Our crews find the leak, repair or replace the damaged pipe, and coordinate

arrangements for traffic control. They then make a temporary repair to the street. This may be noisy, since we use heavy construction equipment.

**4. Take additional steps:** Environmental Response teams make sure stormwater protection measures are in place and effective.

**5. Inform the public:** A PWD spokesperson can provide updates about water emergencies and traffic issues to the media. The Field Supervisor at the site can also provide information to property owners affected by the water emergency. Generally, this occurs when there are multiple properties out of water, significant property damage and traffic disruptions.

**6. Finish the job:** PWD repair crews flush the pipes, clean the area and open the roads. At times, it is necessary to disinfect the water main and test for water quality. Risk Management claims representatives help customers with potential damage claims. The Streets Department paves the damaged portion of the street.

## Tips for Clearing Debris After Repairs

Here are some tips for clearing debris from your water pipes after street repairs have been made:

- **Run your cold water faucets** for several minutes in order to release air and remove debris from the system.
- **Use bathtub, laundry faucets, and hose bibs** when possible for flushing your system as

they generally have a larger capacity and do not have aerator screens to trap debris.

- **Clean aerators** (faucet screens) to remove debris that might clog the water fixture.

For more information, please visit the PWD website at: [www.phila.gov/water](http://www.phila.gov/water).

## Water Emergency Hotline (215) 685-6300

**Open 24 hours/daily** - For reporting water and sewer emergencies, such as water main breaks, water and sewer inquiries, water quality information, taste and odor complaints, open hydrants, inlet cleaning, water conservation programs (CAP), automatic meter reading installations and other inquiries. This hotline takes calls and dispatches crews to investigate and/or fix problems.



Most interruptions to water service are fixed within six to eight hours. In some cases, such as water main breaks that occur in the middle of the night, water is usually restored by the following day.

Visit our website at:  
[www.phila.gov/water](http://www.phila.gov/water)

*PWD thanks the San Diego Water Department for providing some of the enclosed information.*

## What You Need to Know When There's a Loss of H2O:

*A Guide to Water Emergencies*

**Responding to a Water Emergency**

**Tips for Clearing Debris**

**From Sidewalk to Sink**



Water Emergency Hotline  
(215) 685-6300

*Keep this handy for easy reference, and visit our website: [www.phila.gov/water](http://www.phila.gov/water)*



# From Sidewalk to Sink

Once drinking water leaves the PWD water main in the street, it becomes your responsibility. This means you must repair plumbing that connects our water main to you, as well as the plumbing in your home. We have several programs to help; see the list at the end of the brochure.

The illustration to the right shows the water supply and drainage system.

The **Ferrule (1)** connects the water main to your underground water service pipe. Water passes through the ferrule, and into your **water service pipe (2 & 3)**.

In addition to your water service pipe, you are also responsible for:

## Outside your home:

The **curbstop valve (4)**, its **box and cover (5)**, usually located near the curbline in front of your home. If you are repairing your sidewalk, be sure that the curbstop box is not covered with cement. (Damaged curbstop boxes and covers can be replaced at a local hardware or plumbing supply store.)

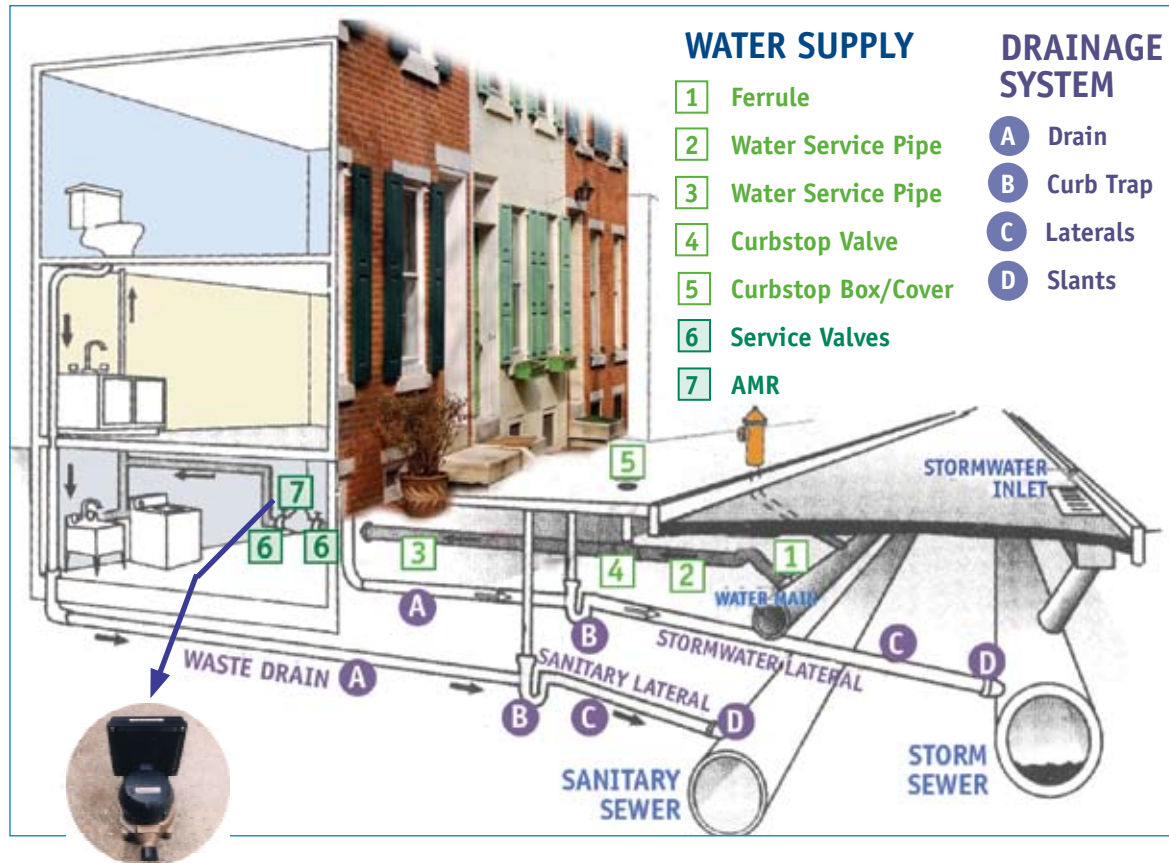
## Inside your home:

The **service valves (6)** on either side of your **automated meter reader (AMR) (7)**. PWD is responsible for the AMR. The valves and AMR should be in good condition and accessible at all times.

## Your Drainage System

The homeowner must maintain household waste pipes as well as pipes leading from the home to PWD's sewers underground. Once the sanitary sewage enters the sewers, PWD takes responsibility.

The sewer system includes your **drain (A)**, **curb trap (B)**, **stormwater** and **sanitary laterals (C)**, and **slant (D)**. The homeowner is responsible for this part of the system.



The Philadelphia Water Department offers the following programs to assist customers with their responsibility of maintaining and/or repairing their home's plumbing system:

## CROSS CONNECTION REPAIR PROGRAM (CCRP)

In many of Philadelphia's homes, sanitary waste and stormwater travel together through a combined sewer system. In other areas, the sanitary waste and stormwater travel in separate piping systems. In the separate sewer system areas, it is important for the homeowner to keep both systems in good operating condition in order to prevent sanitary flow from entering the storm system, and stormwater from entering the sanitary system, also known as a cross-connection. If a cross-connection is identified by the CCRP, PWD will refer the homeowner to the CCRP for repairs. Please call (215) 685-6300 for more information.

## HOMEOWNER'S EMERGENCY LOAN PROGRAM (HELP)

HELP is an interest-free, installment-payment loan program for water service pipe and/or sewer lateral repairs. To apply for a loan or to find out more about HELP, please call (215) 685-4901.

## CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

CAP is designed to help water customers reduce water waste. PWD offers these services to low-income households. For more information, please call (215) 685-6300.

Please visit us at [www.phila.gov/water](http://www.phila.gov/water).