



Advance Notice of Water Shutoff Update

Date	March 9, 2022
To	Executive Committee
From	Citizen Services
Service Area	Water, Waste & Environment
Item No.	EX22-25

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Committee recommends that City Council remove item MN21-12, Advance Notice of Water Shutoff, from the list of outstanding items for City Council.

ISSUE

This report responds to Motion *Advance Notice of Water Shutoff (MN21-12)*:

1. Options to improve the advanced notice provided to citizens whose:
 - a. Water service is going to be shut off; or
 - b. Road is going to be temporarily closed.

2. A plan that shall include the above options to be implemented for the 2022 construction season, and the development of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure System for the 2023 construction season and onwards; and

3. Shall expressly consider the following two factors for the advance notice:
 - a. The preferability of notice to be provided at least the evening before the anticipated work; and
 - b. The preferability of electronic notification of disruption - much as is currently provided for garbage and recycling pickup.

To address MN21-12, the Administration reviewed the City of Regina's (City) processes and conducted jurisdictional scans to inform a review of the City's water shutoff notification processes.

IMPACTS

Financial Impact

The Administration has reviewed the current vacant Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and decided to reallocate resources to ensure water notification process is improved in the future. There is no additional budget required to implement the planned changes.

Policy/Strategic Impacts

The Advance Water Notification is consistent with *Design Regina: The Official Community Plan (OCP)* as follows:

- Advance water notification meets industry best practices for operations of infrastructure (OCP D4 Goal 1 - Safe and Efficient Infrastructure).
- Advance water notification will improve the level of service to our customer (OCP D4 Goal 2 – Asset Management and Service Levels).

Environmental Impacts

City Council set a community goal for the City of achieving net zero emissions and sourcing of net zero renewable energy by 2050. In support of this goal, City Council asked Administration to provide energy and greenhouse gas implications of recommendations so that Council can evaluate the climate impacts of its decisions. The report has limited direct impacts on energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

COMMUNICATIONS

Advance notification letters advising of water outages and road restrictions will be delivered to households where planned maintenance work is scheduled within the next ten days. Letters will be delivered, at least, the evening before the anticipated work and a door-knocker the morning of the repair. This will allow time for residents to draw enough potable water for use in advance of water being shut off. Water outages and service updates for planned maintenance will be available on Regina.ca/wateroutages to provide residents with up-to-date information about temporary water outages in their area. The webpage also includes steps residents can take both to prepare for the water outages and after water supply is resumed.

DISCUSSION

The City is responsible for monitoring and maintaining over 1,200 kilometres of watermains. The

watermain network also contains over 74,000 water service connections, 12,500 water valves and approximately 5,000 fire hydrants. The total replacement cost of the City's water network is approximately \$2.63 billion.

City crews coordinate up to 1,000 planned repairs across the city each year while addressing emergency repairs as needed. The City currently completes water repairs and upgrades using internal construction crews or contractors depending on the repair and project. Watermain breaks occur throughout the year and typically increase during hot, dry summers and the coldest winter months from December to February.

In a standard work week, the City construction crews complete approximately 20 water system repairs and provide approximately 1,000 "Temporary Water Service Outage" door-knockers to residents. On average, the City receives two to three service requests a week about the current water outage notification process.

Current Water Outage Notification Process

City Construction Crews:

- **Capital Construction Locations**

A construction notice is delivered to homes approximately one to three weeks in advance of any work starting, informing residents of the upcoming work, what to expect, road closures and start dates. This letter is a general letter explaining that the location is part of the Street Infrastructure Renewal Project (SIRP), Residential Road Renewal Program (RRRP) or a stand-alone water project and within the project water and sewer assets will be getting replaced.

- **Planned Maintenance Locations**

Once crews are dispatched to a location to complete a repair, the current procedure is for the crew to perform door-to-door notification to residents, advising them that the water will be turned off within the next 30 minutes. If a resident is not home at the time, a blue door-knocker is provided with appropriate information. Water repairs are typically done within four to six hours but are dependent on the complexities of the job. This notice allows residents time to draw enough potable water for drinking and cooking while the work is being completed. If the City is aware that businesses will be affected, we work with the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) and the Water Security Agency (WSA) to provide as much notice as possible and temporary water solutions to the affected businesses.

- **Emergency Locations**

The construction crews meet daily to evaluate and prioritize their workload with emergency water main breaks and leaks considered the highest priority. Emergency repairs may require early

morning and last-minute rescheduling changes and are unpredictable. The same notification procedure for planned maintenance locations occurs for emergency repairs.

A watermain repair is deemed an emergency when:

- A watermain break is flooding the streets and encroaching into a residence and/or business and there is a risk to the health of the public.
- An occupied property is without water service for longer than a 24-hour period.
- Water service is impacted at priority locations such as daycares, schools, nursing homes, hotels, hospitals, and large businesses.

This process can be disruptive to residents but there are situations where work must be completed immediately for the safety of the public, employees and to avoid property damage.

External Construction Crews:

• **Capital Construction Locations**

A construction notice is delivered to the residents approximately one to three weeks in advance prior to any work starting, informing residents of the upcoming work, what to expect, road closures and start dates. This is a general letter explaining that the location is part of SIRP, RRRP or a stand-alone water project and within the project water and sewer assets will be getting replaced.

Most temporary water outages are scheduled in advance. For this type of scheduled service outage, the current procedure is as follows:

- A door-knocker notice with appropriate information, including the time and date of the scheduled water outage, and contact is delivered to each residence.
- These notices are delivered at least the evening before the anticipated work.
- Typical water service outages last four to eight hours, barring unforeseen circumstances during construction.
- For water service outages where it is not possible to provide notice at least the evening before the anticipated work, the contractor performs door-to-door notification to residents, advising them that the water will be turned off. If a resident is not home at the time, they leave a door-knocker notice with appropriate information.

2022 Water Outage Notification Process Improvements

The City understands that lack of water service outage notification can be disruptive to residents and are working on options to improve the water outage notification process. Below are some of the

changes that have been implemented and some changes that will be occurring before the 2022 construction season.

- **Capital Construction Locations**

- Updated the “Temporary Water Service Outage” door-knocker to provide more information on water maintenance work and direct residents to Regina.ca/wateroutages to learn more.
 - These notices are provided as early as 7:00 a.m. for every repair when the construction crew arrives at the work site.
- Updated advanced notification letters for capital construction locations
 - Letter is delivered to the residents approximately one to three weeks in advance prior to any work starting, informing them of the upcoming work, what to expect, road closures and start dates.
- Created a “Temporary Water Service Outage” poster for apartment and condominium buildings.
 - This will allow tenants to see the notice and not rely on the notice from the building manager.
- Added water outage notifications for major roadways into the daily road report on Regina.ca.
 - This information is also shared with local media outlets and posted on social media.
- Implemented having the City’s internal maps highlight businesses such as hospitals, schools, care homes and daycares for better planning.

- **Planned Maintenance Locations**

- Create advanced notification letters for any planned maintenance work:
 - These letters would be provided, at the least, the evening before the anticipated work and explain that a construction crew will be attending the location within the next ten days, barring unforeseen circumstances and what to expect during the construction work and how to prepare.
 - Resident would still receive the “Temporary Water Service Outage” blue door-knocker the morning of the water outage.
- Water Service Outage information made available on Regina.ca/wateroutages:
 - Planned maintenance work updated daily.
 - Frequently asked questions and answers section.

2023 and Beyond Notification Process Improvements

- **Online Utility Customer Software**

The City is currently undertaking a Water Meter and Automatic Meter Infrastructure Project. As part of this project, software will be implemented that will allow subscribing customers to view their daily

water usage and monthly bills. It also will have the added functionality of providing the City with the ability to communicate directly with those same customers via email and/or text. Water related campaigns and conservation ideas can be communicated to all subscribers or targeted messages sent only to selected customer types (i.e., commercial, residential, etc.). As well, the Administration would be able to send specific messaging regarding upcoming water outages or other advisories to specific customers in selected geographical area. It is anticipated through this software that water outage notifications, including emergency water outages, can be electronically provided to affected residents at least the evening before, in most cases.

Survey of Other Municipalities

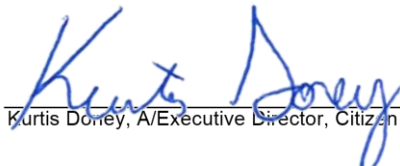
Administration has completed a review of information provided online and through conversation with staff from other municipalities in Canada regarding advance notification to residents that will be having the water shut off. The purpose of this was to review how they inform residents in a timely manner. Generally, municipalities deliver letters or door-knockers to residents who may be affected by a water outage. For more detailed information on this review, see Appendix A.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 13, 2021, City Council adopted *MN21-12* and requested options to provide advanced notice of water shutoff that will outline the resources necessary to provide notice, at least, the evening before the anticipated work, and that the information be included in the report prepared in response to item *MN21-12*.

Respectfully submitted,

Respectfully submitted,



Kurtis Doney, A/Executive Director, Citizen Services

2/18/2022



Kim Ohra, Executive Director, Citizen Services

2/24/2022

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Municipal Scan