

Frequently Asked Questions – Raw Water Main Break

- Will Brunswick County shut off my water over the weekend? Will we run out of water?
 - Brunswick County has no plans to shut off water, other than irrigation meters of customers who continue to irrigate despite mandatory restrictions. This would only change if the situation changed and the County was unable to provide water to all customers.

In addition to getting water from the Cape Fear River through the water main that is being repaired, Brunswick County also gets raw water from wells, and may utilize mutual aid agreements with neighboring water systems to help supplement water supply. The County has raw water storage tanks near the Northwest Water Treatment Plant and has established additional water storage reserves in the area; because of customers' efforts to conserve water, we have not tapped into our reserves at this time. Additionally, crews have worked to find multiple ways to keep water flowing to the treatment plant, though it would likely be a reduced amount. If water stopped flowing completely to the storage tanks, the amount of time the water in those tanks would last is dependent upon usage, and is one reason it is so critical for citizens to conserve water. If this were to happen, we would notify residents using media, social media, emails and the CodeRED notification system; citizens can sign up or update CodeRED information at <http://www.brunswickcountync.gov/codered>.

We anticipate providing water to all customers throughout the repairs if customers continue to conserve water and decrease usage, and barring unexpected problems with the repairs.

- Do I need to boil water?
 - Not at this time. The water main that broke carries raw (untreated) water from the Cape Fear River to water treatment plants. We are asking residents to use less water, as the amount of raw water flowing through the pipe has been reduced. If customers do not decrease water usage, then as repairs continue, water pressure could drop, necessitating boiling water at that time.
- Why are repairs taking longer than initially thought?
 - The break in the raw water main is located approximately 200 feet off the road, in an area that was already saturated with rain from Hurricane Matthew. Water leaking from the break in the pipe has contributed to the flooding around the pipe. To be able to access the break, both to assess damage or to work on repairs, crews have had to bring in pumps to drain the area around the pipe. Initial plans to repair the pipe were unsuccessful. Crews have started working on a temporary bypass around the break, which will allow water to flow while repairs are made, but there was preparatory work to be done and parts that needed to come in before that work could begin.
- When do you think it will be fixed?
 - Crews are working right now to put a temporary bypass around the break. This will allow water to keep flowing to the Northwest Water Treatment Plant while repairs are made, as well as help to reduce flooding at the site of the break. Once repairs to the main are made, the bypass will be removed and raw water will flow through the main again. We do not

know exactly how long the repair process will take, but we expect water flow to be reduced – and the need for water conservation to remain – at least into next week, and possibly longer.

- What has Brunswick County done to help make sure water is available for fire fighting?
 - Brunswick County does get water from wells, and has the option to open interconnections with neighboring water systems through mutual aid agreements. Crews have been taking steps to keep some water flowing to the Northwest Treatment Plant, as much as possible during the repairs. Raw water storage tanks store raw water before it reaches the Northwest Water Treatment Plant and crews have set up additional water storage reserves in this area; Brunswick County has been able to maintain water levels in these tanks, because customers have conserved water and reduced usage. Brunswick County also has numerous teams with tankers in place that can use water from creeks, ponds and other sources in the event of a fire.
- Are people conserving water?
 - Many people are following the mandatory water restrictions, and taking additional steps to reduce water usage. Overall water consumption is down because of these efforts. However, some people still continue to ignore the restrictions, irrigating lawns, washing cars in driveways, or wasting water. These people are at risk of fines or termination of irrigation services – as well as impacting the water levels and flow to all residents as repairs go on - if they do not comply.
- Do these restrictions affect me?
 - If you purchase water from Brunswick County Public Utilities, you are affected. Additionally, many utility providers in our area purchase wholesale water from Brunswick County Public Utilities; if you purchase water from one of those providers, you are also affected. Those providers include:
 - City of Northwest
 - City of Southport
 - H2GO
 - Town of Holden Beach
 - Town of Leland
 - Town of Navassa
 - Town of Oak Island
 - Town of Ocean Isle Beach
 - Town of Shallotte
 - People who use wells are not affected by the restrictions. The Village of Bald Head Island has been able to utilize other water resources instead of wholesale water from Brunswick County Public Utilities, so utility customers of Bald Head Island are not affected by the restrictions.
- Why do I still see car washes operating/golf courses irrigating?
 - Golf courses use effluent (reclaimed water) or non-potable water from retention ponds for irrigation. No golf courses in Brunswick County use potable water for irrigation. Commercial car washes can still operate at this time as well; car washes use relatively little water because they recycle the water they use, and are the livelihood for their operators and employees. Closing commercial car washes will not cause much of a

decrease in water usage and will diminish their ability to earn a living. However, when we can no longer provide adequate water to our treatment plant, we will restrict their operations.

- What can I do to decrease my water consumption?
 - Outdoor usage of water is currently prohibited, including irrigation and washing of cars at home. Residents can take additional steps to reduce water usage, like taking short showers instead of baths, only running the dishwasher or washing machine when it is full (instead of running partial loads), and not letting the water run while brushing teeth or when it is otherwise not being used.
- Did Hurricane Matthew/flooding cause the pipe to break?
 - We do not know at this time what caused the pipe to break.