

# WATER MATTERS

Safe, dependable, and affordable water now and into the future



Board of Water Supply  
City and County of Honolulu

Vol. 1, Issue 1

Spring 2014

## Water Matters

**Water Matters** is a new quarterly publication created by the Board of Water Supply (BWS) to stay in touch with you, our customer. The name **Water Matters** reflects the value of water as an important and finite resource that everyone needs to help protect and preserve, as well as the vital service the BWS provides to maintain the quality of life we all enjoy and count on. It also indicates that the content is water-related and may be useful to you.

Through this newsletter, you will learn about BWS's plans, programs, and events as well as receive helpful information about customer services, water conservation tips, and other drinking water matters that impact Oahu water users.

**Water Matters** will be distributed via customer billing, Neighborhood Board meetings, BWS social media platforms, and the BWS website at [www.boardofwatersupply.com](http://www.boardofwatersupply.com).

For questions, comments, or to provide feedback about **Water Matters**, please call the BWS Communications Office at (808) 748-5041 or email [ContactUs@hbws.org](mailto:ContactUs@hbws.org).

## Discover Card Now Accepted

Effective January 1, 2014, BWS accepts **Discover Card** payments in addition to **MasterCard** and **Visa** credit card payments over the phone and in person only. Online payments may be made with Visa or MasterCard credit cards only.

## Did You Know?

The Board of Water Supply, not the Honolulu Fire Department, is responsible for the inspection, maintenance, and repair of Oahu's municipal fire hydrants.

The color yellow was chosen for municipal hydrants in the 1970s because of its high visibility.



## BWS Water System Plans for the Future



The Board of Water Supply (BWS) is adapting to the needs of its customers to provide safe, reliable and affordable water. The BWS's Water Master Plan is designed to identify ways to extend the life of existing infrastructure,

reduce main breaks, and develop a long-term Capital Improvement Program with a 30-year planning timeline. This means that the Plan will look at the **2,100** miles of pipes, **90** booster pump stations, **94** potable water sources, and **172** reservoirs on Oahu and determine the condition of the infrastructure and what needs to be done to keep them in efficient and safe working order. Inevitably, maintenance, repairs, and improvements will have to be made - and that can be a difficult process.

The BWS will use state-of-the-art technologies and analyses to gather comprehensive information on our water system, much of which is over 50 years old. The

BWS will use this information to determine where attention and funding can best be invested to maintain water quality and safety, ensure system reliability, and carefully balance infrastructure needs with affordability for customers.

BWS operations and capital improvement programs are funded by a combination of funds collected from rate payers, low-interest bonds, and State Revolving Funds loans. BWS does not receive any funds generated from City property taxes.

Upgrading our water system is crucial to ensure a future supply of water for our Island. More details of the Water Master Plan will be shared in future issues.



Oahu's soils are highly corrosive and eat away at the pipes.

## Protect Yourself From Individuals Impersonating BWS Employees

Recently, the Board of Water Supply (BWS) has become aware of individuals impersonating BWS staff to fraudulently obtain personal information and/or payment from unsuspecting BWS customers. To protect yourself, please consider the following information.

**Over the phone:** The BWS does not call a customer, demand payment, and collect payment all in the same phone call. A customer who is contacted by the BWS about an overdue payment will be asked to make a separate call to (808) 748-5030 to pay by credit card. Also, the BWS does not call customers outside regular business hours (Monday - Friday, 7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) to request payment.

**In person:** All personnel involved in official BWS activities will be properly credentialed, wearing official BWS attire with the BWS logo, driving BWS labeled vehicles, and carrying an official City and County of Honolulu badge, with the agency identified as the BWS. If you are approached by an individual claiming to be from the BWS, request for official identification.

If you receive a call requesting your personal information or bill payment, call BWS customer service at (808) 748-5030 to confirm that the person is associated with the BWS. If customers observe any suspicious activity, please call 9-1-1 to file a police report. You may also call the BWS at (808) 748-5041 to file an additional report.

## Detect-a-Leak for Water Conservation

Conserving water at all levels -- in individual households, businesses, and in government agencies -- is vital to ensure that we all have enough water for centuries to come. One way to improve water conservation and efficiency in the home or business is to find and fix leaks.

Monthly leak inspection and repair is an important part of our overall efforts to preserve and protect our precious water supply. Check for leaks and seepage in toilets, plumbing fixtures, and irrigation systems and fix them quickly to save on household expenses. It's easy to do and in most cases homeowners can fix leaks without a major financial investment.

Follow these easy steps to check your property for leaks:

1. Turn off all your water faucets, pipes, and other water-using fixtures to make sure no water is running.
2. Locate your water meter, which should be in or near the sidewalk area fronting your building or home.

3. Open the meter cover and check to see if the dial is moving. If it is, you have a leak! Replace the cover and rotate it to secure it.

4. Visually inspect faucets, pipes, and other fixtures. For toilets, use dye tablets to check for leakage. Free dye tablets are available for pick-up at the BWS Public Service Building lobby located at 630 S. Beretania Street.

5. Finally, examine your lawn for wet spots where grass seems greener. This could indicate a broken underground pipe, which also is a major concern.



For more information on how to check for leaks visit [www.boardofwatersupply.com](http://www.boardofwatersupply.com) or call (808) 748-5041.

## What causes water main breaks?

**ANSWER:** There are many reasons for water main breaks and leaks. It's interesting to note that most of Oahu's pipes are over 50 years old; the majority dating back to the 1950s. The most commonly encountered reasons for main breaks are: corrosion, design & construction, and pressure surges.

**Corrosion.** Oahu's soils are highly corrosive and eat away at the pipes. Many of the pipes are metallic which, when buried in and around corrosive soil, weaken over time.

**Design & Construction.** Pipelines have been found without bedding material and even some resting on

coral or rocks that can create fractures over time and result in failures.

**Pressure Surges.** Wells and booster pumps cycle on and off thousands of times a day, in addition to private industry pumps that cycle as well, leading to high pressure spikes that can lead to water main failure. Power failure and fluctuations also contribute to pressure spikes further weakening the pipe system.

*The Board of Water Supply is finding ways to minimize water main breaks through maintenance and replacement as outlined in the Water Master Plan.*



**TROUBLE CALL ... (808) 748-5000**  
Customer Service ... (808) 748-5030  
Billing & Payments ... (808) 748-5020

630 S. Beretania Street · Honolulu, Hawaii 96843  
(808) 748-5000  
[www.boardofwatersupply.com](http://www.boardofwatersupply.com)