



The Hydrant

So, how are YOUR pipes doing?

The customer is responsible for the service line (the water line running from their meter to their home), as well as the plumbing in the house. Over the past 5-10 years several service lines have developed leaks, resulting in a large loss of water, and sometimes a fine. A couple of these were caused by growing tree roots, one was probably caused by poor bedding of the service line located under a driveway, but old age will probably play a large part in most failures, both past and future.

Cape San Juan was originally developed more than 50 years ago. Some of the service lines may have reached the end of their useful life. Contractors used several types of pipe when installing service lines. Some estimates of useful life are as follows:

- PE (polyethylene) 50 years
- PVC (sch 40) 50 years
- PVC (sch 20) very short life; cracks easily even when new
- Copper 30-50 years

Water and soil characteristics play a role. Acidic soil, which is predominant on this Island, will corrode copper. Somewhat acidic water will also corrode copper although we currently maintain a healthy pH in the water we provide with aeration and recirculation. But, prior to aeration, installed in 2004, the water was slightly acidic.

PE tends to get brittle and the connections aren't very reliable.



Another product called PEX has been around for nearly 40 years, and is often used now for both service lines and in-house plumbing. It has an estimated useful life of 50-100 years. Since it is flexible it is less apt to fail due to freezing, and roots tend to squeeze the pipe rather than cause a failure.



The bottom line is . . . the water system downstream of the meter is the responsibility of the homeowner. So it would pay to understand what type of piping was used, how old the installation is and make a judgment about when it is time to replace your lines. And, if a service line does develop a leak, and it is fairly old, it makes more sense to replace the entire line rather than hand digging around to find the leak and do a patch job.



Another option to consider is insuring your plumbing. Homeowners insurance typically does not cover the cost of replacing a failed service line, the water lost or any resulting fines. National Water Company is a firm in Washington that insures water and septic lines, plus interior plumbing for a premium of \$19.92 per month. This coverage does not cover the cost of water used or any resulting fines. They apparently have a network of contractors they work with in the event of a claim and they assert that they can provide rapid response, even to our island.

SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT REBATE

CSJWD now has a rebate available to help a bit with service line replacement. When you replace your water line from your meter to your house you will receive a water bill credit of \$250. When the work is in progress let Sherri Phelps know so she can take a look at it and add the credit on to your water bill when the project is completed.

Cape San Juan Water District was sad to accept Susan Reed's resignation from the board in October. She served faithfully as a Commissioner since August 2014. She was a source of many good ideas, and a strident conservationist. Betsy Cooper has agreed to fill the remainder of her term, and joined the Board in November.

Water Board Commissioners
Clark Munroe 378-9564
Betsy Cooper 378-4513
Ken O'Brien 370-5642

Water System Manager and Administrative Officer
Sherri Phelps 317-8335 sjwawater@gmail.com

Layout and design Susie Carey