

Water Theft

It is not uncommon to see a scene on TV of a hot summer day, children playing outside surrounded by apartments in a crowded city block, and a fire hydrant shooting a geyser of water into the air, seemingly only for the benefit of cooling off the children as they play. A direct result of getting a perception of reality from what we see on TV leads people to this idea that fire hydrants exist for the public good and are to be used by the public whenever they like. At one time, we witnessed a landscaper use a fire hydrant to fill the bladder on their sod roller. Whether filling a sod roller or opening a hydrant so that children can cool off on a hot summer day, both cases are instances of water theft.

Water theft is the use of water without paying for it. The firefighters are the only people allowed to use the hydrants without a CCWSA fire hydrant box (see attached picture). This box serves a couple of different purposes: **1.** To keep track of how much water you use to generate an appropriate bill. **2.** To protect our infrastructure by the use of a backflow device. Backflow devices allow water to only flow in one direction. This feature prevents any potential contaminants from entering our service lines. They can be obtained with a \$1350 security deposit and a \$5/day rental fee. These boxes are billed at \$50 for the first 10,000 gallons. Please get in touch with our Customer Service Department for further information on rates.

Illegal connections are not limited to fire hydrants; an undocumented connection to our water or sewer main is also theft. These illegal connections can cause several issues for both our water and wastewater infrastructure. Our SOP for starting a new water service includes tapping the main, running the line from the main to right-of-way, and installing a backflow device and meter. An illegal water connection could present damage to our water main if improperly tapped and could provide the opportunity for potential contaminants to get into our lines. Illegal Sewer connections present a different type of problem; in particular, it impedes our ability to plan for flows. Our collection system of lift stations, pumps, and manholes is designed for a known number of homes that we have on record that are tied in. Undocumented connections prevent us from adequately planning to handle the flow that is being received. The illegal discharge of waste into a wastewater manhole is the source of other potential problems due to its difference in things like pH and Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) from the typical composition of our wastewater. This line leads directly back to our wastewater facility, which could compromise the health of our plant. To be clear, no one has permission to dump anything into any manhole.

CCWSA is a public, not-for-profit authority and does not receive any county or city government revenue. Therefore, we make every effort to operate most efficiently and cost-effectively. Simply put, it costs money to provide drinking water, treat wastewater, and maintain the lines that carry both. This is not a cheap endeavor, and we rely 100% on the revenue we receive from services rendered to pay for those things. For this reason and the public's safety, we take illegal connections seriously.

We enforce this commitment with the following fines:

1. Fire Hydrants-\$2500/offense 2. Water mains/bypass residential meter-\$1750/offense 3. Sewer- \$2500/offense

Please help us protect our infrastructure.

- If you have any topics you would like covered or have any questions in general, please email them to ccwsaea@gmail.com.



**HELP US SPOT
WATER THEFT**



**If water is
being
withdrawn
from a
hydrant
without a
meter box it
IS Theft**