

Most people do not know that drinking water is also used for firefighting purposes in Nashville. In addition to water treatment and the distribution system, Metro Water Services maintains over 20,000 fire hydrants within our service area.

The fire department relies on these hydrants to provide public protection in the event of an emergency and it is crucial that fire hydrants be accessible and operational.

Routine maintenance and flow tests are performed by MWS on every hydrant once every three years for readiness to service and aesthetics. Additionally, during the course of every year, Metro Nashville Fire Department Engine Companies perform checks on hydrants in the Engine Companies' territory and notifies MWS of corrective action needs (typically missing caps, chains, brush removal, etc.).

Corrective work on inoperable hydrants is done immediately if around critical establishments such as hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, schools, etc. or if not in close proximity to another hydrant. In locations not near a critical establishment, repairs are scheduled as quickly as possible taking into consideration the ability to access another hydrant in the immediate area.

When a hydrant is out of service, it is tagged as such and the Fire Department and Office of Emergency Management are notified and made aware of the proximity of alternate hydrants so dispatchers are able to guide responding units.

In Nashville, hydrant barrels and caps are color coded based on hydrant functionality. This color coding provides important information to responders during an emergency.

Tips for assisting MWS and the Fire Department:

Keep the fire hydrant around your property visible and free of obstacles. There should be a three (3) foot clearance around fire hydrants. Debris piles, fencing, landscaping, weeds, etc. prevent visibility and hinder access for firefighters.

Do not block a fire hydrant by parking vehicles next to it. Vehicles should not be parked within 15 feet of a fire hydrant. Doing so may result in a citation.

Do not open or take water from a fire hydrant. Unauthorized hydrant use can hamper firefighting, impair the water system and cause injury. A permit from Metro Water Services and backflow equipment is required to take water from a fire hydrant. Taking unauthorized water from a fire hydrant is theft.

Do not tamper with a fire hydrant. Improper operation of a hydrant could result in damage to yourself and the hydrant. Damaged hydrants may no longer work properly in the event of an emergency.

Report any observed problems with hydrants such as missing caps, open caps, misalignment, partially buried, needing paint, dirty, heavy vegetation, etc. Also, if you see a fire hydrant leaking or damaged or suspect theft of water from a hydrant, report it to Metro Water Services at (615) 862-4600.