

Healthy Hydrants

Who owns the fire hydrant? No doubt you do, paid by your taxes. Your municipal water supplier provides the water but who is responsible for the good working order of the hydrant? Most likely your local Fire Department or Water Department is responsible for inspections, flushing, flow testing and lubrication of the external fittings. The municipal water supplier is most likely responsible for repairs and replacements.

However, they are not typically responsible for private hydrants*.

Private hydrants may be located in subdivisions, condos, retirement communities, apartment centers, private roads, etc.

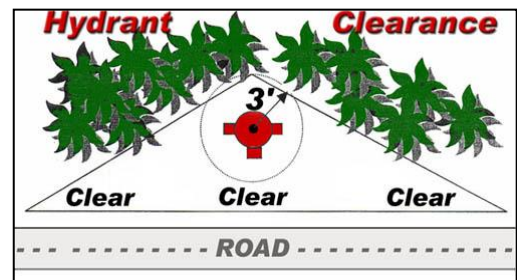
It is in your best interest to ensure that your fire hydrant and your backup fire hydrant are in good working order. They are more complicated than what you might expect. Regular inspections and maintenance of fire hydrants by the fire department or water department are essential to ensure adequate water resources during fire and other related emergencies. If a fire hydrant malfunctions or becomes inaccessible, fire department operations may be hampered. Learn if you have public or private hydrants and verify who is responsible for maintenance.



If you see an “Out Of Service” ring or a bag covering a hydrant, be persistent in calling authorities to have it repaired.

Never operate the hydrant yourself. As surprising as this may be, you can easily damage the hydrant and/or the municipal water lines by improper operation. Instead, ask when your hydrant was last flushed and maintained. Be persistent!

As a property owner it is your responsibility to maintain the proper clearance around a hydrant. Pictured right is a typical clearance specification but you should check with you local department for their specific requirements. If your area uses a dry hydrant* pictured below, use a similar specification and be aggressive to ensure the clearance specification is in compliance.



If your hydrant is not on your property and you see that clearance is not properly maintained, be assertive and insist that it be visible at all times. Consider appropriate markings for heavy snow country.



***A dry hydrant is** a non-pressurized pipe system that is permanently installed below the freeze line into lakes, ponds, streams, and other water sources to provide water for firefighting. Since there is no water pressure within the pipe, it is called "dry." In many rural areas, obtaining water for firefighting is difficult due to the lack of water mains and domestic supply. Dry hydrant installation improves rural fire protection by allowing fire trucks to access nearby water sources instead of trucking water long distances, thus saving time and property.

