



Water Main Bypass FAQ

Why is a temporary bypass necessary?

Many of Somerville's pipes are older and in need of repair or replacement. When a water main is taken out of service for system upgrades or repairs, it is replaced with temporary water bypass piping to ensure residents and businesses continue to receive water, with minimal disruption, as the work is ongoing.

What does a temporary bypass consist of?

A temporary water main bypass consists of above-ground piping (typically PVC, steel, or high-density polyethylene), hoses, and valves that allows for continuous water flow when an existing section of water main is under repair, replacement, or rehabilitation. This bypass piping is typically connected to a hydrant at each end so that water can continue to be circulated throughout the system.

The temporary water bypass is then most often connected to buildings/residences via a rubber hose attached to an exterior spigot.

How is a temporary bypass installed?

Construction crews will notify you prior to connecting the water main bypass to your building. Installation may require crews to access your property for brief periods of time.

In order to connect existing domestic services to the bypass, access to a building or residence is often required to disconnect permanent service and allow the temporary hose connected to the spigot to feed the internal plumbing (cont'd next page).





How is a temporary bypass installed (cont'd)?

In order to connect any existing fire suppression services to the bypass, contractors will typically excavate down to the existing service and make a connection underground, as an above-ground hose connection will not provide adequate flow for fire suppression (i.e., sprinklers).

Is water delivered via a temporary bypass safe to drink?

Yes, water delivered through a water main bypass is safe to drink.

Temporary bypass systems are required to be tested for potability through the same process as a water main prior to activation. Contractors are required to submit water quality documentation and test reports to the City for approval prior to switching buildings and residences to the bypass system.

Does a water main bypass affect water temperature?

During hotter months, water in the bypass system may get warm in areas where the piping and/or temporary hose connections are above-ground. If you are receiving warm water from your cold tap, run the water for 30-60 seconds and the temperature should start to decrease.

Can I use my outdoor hose while hooked up to a temporary bypass?

Yes, you can use your outdoor hose when hooked up to a bypass. The valve connecting the bypass with your building should contain a secondary hookup (i.e., hose splitter) for a garden hose. If you are connected to the bypass and do not have a hose splitter installed, please contact the Engineering Dept. so they may ask the contractor(s) to install one.

Additional Questions and Support

If you have additional questions, please call the Engineering Division at 617-625-6600 ext. 5400 or email construction@somervillema.gov.

For any translation requests, contact 311(617-666-3311) or SomerViva@somervillema.gov.

Persons with disabilities who need auxiliary aids or reasonable modifications should please contact Adrienne Pomeroy in advance at 617-625-6600 x 2059 or ADA@somervillema.gov.