



GAINESVILLE

**Department of Water Resources
Backflow Prevention Program**

**Fire Hydrant Water Use
Policies and Procedures Manual**

**Effective January 1, 2010
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INTRODUCTION

The City of Gainesville Department of Water Resources (Gainesville DWR) recognizes that there are instances where individuals or businesses (hereinafter referred to as applicant) may need to obtain potable water from a distant location or where a permanent water service connection is not warranted. In these instances, the Gainesville DWR allows applicants to use fire hydrants in certain areas to obtain water through a Fire Hydrant Water Use Permit system whereby the Gainesville DWR permits special water meters for fire hydrants. This manual outlines the requirements for obtaining a fire hydrant meter, the use of hydrants, and operational restrictions.

The un-metered removal of water from any fire hydrant for any use other than firefighting is illegal as a violation of City Municipal Code. Violators are subject to fines and imprisonment.

PURPOSE

The purpose of these policies and procedures is to assure:

- protection of the system from contamination from backflows,
- continuous service to fixed customers,
- protection of the distribution system from damages due to improper hydrant use, and
- proper accounting of water usage

PERMITS

A Fire Hydrant Water Use Permit will be issued upon application for any water use from fire hydrants. Suitable uses of water withdrawn from hydrants include filling tanker truck for seeding or watering operation, filling of swimming pools, construction activities, and irrigation. The use of water from a hydrant for car washing is prohibited if the waste water is not discharged into the public sanitary sewer system.

Permits are valid for City of Gainesville DWR fire hydrants only. Hydrants maintained by the Braselton, Buford, Etowah, Flowery Branch, Gwinnett, Lula or other private water systems may not be used.

A copy of the Fire Hydrant Water Use Permit shall be available for inspection at the fire hydrant site where the water is being withdrawn from the system.

The permit may be revoked at the discretion of the utilities department for failure of the applicant to comply with the policies and procedures as outlined herein and/or instruction from authorized utilities department representatives.

FEES AND RATES

The following fees and rates apply to the fire hydrant water sales:

Application Fee:

A non-refundable application fee in the amount of forty-five dollars (\$45.00) for a ¾ inch meter or a 3 inch meter or will be required from all contractors and individuals prior to obtaining a Fire Hydrant Water Use Permit.

Deposit:

A refundable security deposit in the amount of two thousand four hundred fifty dollars (\$2,450.00) for a 3 inch meter or three hundred seventy-five dollars (\$375.00) for a ¾ inch meter will be required from all contractors and individuals prior to obtaining a Fire Hydrant Water Use Permit. This deposit will be refunded when the meter has been returned and all bills have been paid, to include water usage and if necessary, the costs of any damage to the meter, fire hydrants, or the water system. A separate permit and deposit is required for each hydrant meter permitted.

Water Use:

The applicant will be charged for all water consumed on the permitted meter at the outside city rate posted in the current water and sewer rate schedule. If the meter is kept for more than one month, readings must be provided for billing water consumption and must be performed by Department of Water Resources staff. These readings must be provided between the 1st and 5th day of each month.

Readings:

The applicant will need to email a picture of the hydrant meter which displays the current reading. Include your account number or a picture of the serial number to identify your account. This email should be sent to utilitybilling@gainesvillega.gov each month between the 1st and the 5th. You must email this information whether there has been usage or not.

Penalty:

There will be a one hundred fifty dollar (\$150.00) penalty assessed for failure to have meters read by the 5th day of the month. In addition, if permit holders habitually neglect to email their readings by the 5th of the month, or if they do not return their meter for reading at all during the month, the permit will be revoked and the deposit forfeited. In this instance, failure to return the meter will result in “theft by taking” charges.

Tamper:

If the meter, chamber or any part of the Fire Hydrant Meter has been tampered with a \$100.00 tamper fee will be added to your account.

Payment on Account:

Payment on the account is required by the due date shown on the bill. If payment is not made by that date, a late payment penalty may be assessed on the account. Delinquent accounts are subject to a service charge and the applicant will be asked to return the meter. Failure to return the meter can result in the applicant forfeiting their deposit and criminal charges being filed for theft of the meter. The remaining delinquent amount may be reported to a Collection Agency and/or Credit Bureau.

REPORTING OF WATER WITHDRAWAL LOCATIONS

During the life of the issued Fire Hydrant Water Use Permit, the applicant shall notify the Department of Water Resources of each hydrant location from which water is being obtained using a three inch (3") meter. Notice must be given on the day a location is first activated. When notifying the department, the caller must indicate the days that water will be withdrawn at the location. Report water use locations by calling the Systems Maintenance office at (770) 535-6881. It is the applicant's responsibility to notify the Department of Water Resources of any changes in withdrawal location.

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION

The name, address, and telephone number of the person and/or business that owns or operates the tanker truck, hydro-seeding truck, tank, container, etc., shall be permanently lettered on both sides of vehicle. Letters and numerals shall be in bold print on a background of a contrasting color and should be no less than 2-1/2 inches in height.

BACKFLOW PREVENTION

All fire hydrant operation shall be consistent with the Standard Plumbing Code in regards to backflow prevention. Hoses attached to hydrants shall not be submerged, left unsecured, or left unattended in a pool, pond, lake, container, etc., at any time while it is attached to a fire hydrant. A minimum "Air Gap" equal to 2.0 times the outlet diameter of the hose shall be maintained at all times above the pool or container overflow level. The connection to the fire hydrant shall also include the utilization of the backflow prevention assembly furnished with the meter to prevent backflows.

HYDRANT OPERATION (See further instructions on Pages 9 & 10)

When attaching Fire Hydrant Meter to the Fire Hydrant, the meter must be supported from the ground to the bottom of the meter. The weight of the meter hanging unsupported from the hydrant may cause damage to the meter.

Opening or closing a fire hydrant quickly can cause pressure surges (water hammer) in the distribution system which can rupture water mains and burst water meters. Fire hydrants shall be opened and closed in a slow and careful manner in order to prevent water hammer in the system. Hydrants must be opened a minimum of eight (8) turns to

prevent undermining by water released through the hydrant drain holes. An approved fire hydrant wrench (furnished with the meter at no extra charge) shall be used to open or close fire hydrants. Adjustable pipe wrenches, cheater bars, etc. are strictly forbidden due to the fact they can damage the fire hydrant. Applicants that are caught using these forbidden tools will have their meter, wrenches and hoses confiscated and future permits may be denied. The permit holder shall not use more than one of the 2-1/2 inch connections on a fire hydrant at the same time.

Any problems that occur, such as dirty water, hydrants that are hard to operate, etc. while the permit holder is using a fire hydrant should be reported immediately to the Department of Water Resources at (770) 535-6881. Under no circumstances should you force the hydrant if it is hard to operate. Doing so can result in damage to the hydrant itself.

All costs incurred by the Department of Water Resources in repairing system facilities and appurtenances or in correcting system pressure or water quality problems arising out of the improper operation of a fire hydrant under the issued permit, shall be borne by the permit holder.

WITHDRAWAL RESTRICTION

Due to limitations of the water distribution system, use of fire hydrants for other than firefighting purposes may be limited in certain areas. In addition, during times of drought, water main breaks, severe system demand, or other system emergencies, the Department of Water Resources reserves the right to suspend the privilege of any and all Fire Hydrant Water Use Permit holders to obtain water from the system.

If at any time the City of Gainesville is under a state issued water ban, the permit holder must abide by the water ban guidelines. Violations of this may result in revocation of your permit and loss of deposit.

LIABILITY OF PERMIT HOLDER

The permit holder assumes all liability for any, and all, damages to individuals, private property, public property, and/or repairs to the Department of Water Resources' facilities and appurtenances arising out of actions taken by the permit holder to obtain water from the system using a fire hydrant. In addition, the permit holder is responsible for any, and all, damages to the hydrant meter due to theft, vandalism, weather, etc. If the meter is stolen, a police report must be filed and a copy of said report is required by the Utility.

PENALTIES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE

Individual violations shall be punishable in accordance with City of Gainesville Municipal Code.

NOTICE TO FIRE HYDRANT METER USERS

In order to comply with the Federal Clean Water Act and State of Georgia Environmental Protection Division backflow prevention requirements, the City of Gainesville DWR has included a backflow prevention program for fire hydrant use. The Department of Water Resources has a policy regarding the use of fire hydrants as a source of water for non-firefighting uses. A copy of that policy is included with this notice. The primary purpose of the backflow prevention program is to protect the integrity of the potable water supply from inadvertent contamination or pollution by an applicant.

All meters that will be used to retrieve water from the Gainesville DWR's water system shall be fitted with a backflow prevention assembly. All users are required to return their meter once a year to the Bradford Street Facility at 1006 South Bradford Street Extension for backflow testing. Meters may be dropped off between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. for a period of 24 hours.

Applicants who do not return their meter once a year for inspection will be notified to do so within thirty (30) days. If the applicant does not comply within that time frame they will be asked to return their meter to the Gainesville DWR and further permits for hydrant meter rental may be denied.

All applicants are asked to complete an application including their business license or social security number, location where the meter will be used and what type of work the meter will be used for. A contact name is required along with the phone number in case of questions or problems concerning the use of the meter or your account.

Questions regarding this notice or the fire hydrant use policy may be directed to Malcolm Wiley, Distribution & Collection Systems Manager at (770) 535-6880.

**DIRECTIONS TO THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AT 757 QUEEN CITY PARKWAY**

You may apply on line but a link is listed below if you need the address to apply for a meter.

<https://www.gainesville.org/directions-2>

**DIRECTIONS FROM THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE DEPARTMENT OF WATER
RESOURCES TO
1006 BRADFORD STREET EXTENSION**

To Pick Up or Return a Meter

Turn left out of the parking lot and left onto Queen City Parkway.

Go to the 2nd traffic light and take a left onto Industrial Blvd.

Take the 3rd right onto Bradford Street, right before the Amtrak station.

Go over two sets of railroad tracks and turn right into the warehouse parking lot. The property is surrounded by a chain link fence and you will see the City of Gainesville signage.

DIRECTIONS TO BRADFORD STREET FACILITY 1006 BRADFORD STREET EXTENSION

To Pick Up or Return a Meter and To Have Meter Read

From I-985, Athens, Lula or Gwinnett County - Use Exit 22 – turn north on E. E. Butler (Athens Highway) to left on West Ridge Road (first intersection). Take a right on Bradford Street Extension (first Street). Proceed to Department of Water Resources Warehouse Facility on the left before railroad tracks. Metal building with a chain link fence around it.

From Dahlonega or Cleveland, enter Gainesville and turn right (west) on Jesse Jewell Parkway. Take a left on Bradford Street across the street from the Georgia Mountains Center (GMC) next to CVS pharmacy. Proceed to cross the railroad tracks. First facility on right (enclosed by chain link fence).

From Cumming, take Browns Bridge Road (SR 369) to right on Bradford Street across street from the Georgia Mountains Center (GMC) next to CVS pharmacy. Proceed to cross the railroad tracks. First facility on right (enclosed by chain link fence).

From Dawsonville, take Dawsonville Highway (SR 53) to left on Jesse Jewell Parkway. Take a right on Bradford Street across street from the Georgia Mountains Center (GMC) next to CVS pharmacy. Proceed to cross the railroad tracks. First facility on right (enclosed by chain link fence).

From DWR Administration Building, turn right out of parking lot onto Summit Street, turn right onto Pine Street, turn left onto Industrial Boulevard, turn right on Hancock Avenue, Cross over railroad tracks, and turn left into Bradford Street Facility (first on left after tracks and enclosed by chain link fence).

TO: Fire Hydrant Meter Customers:
FROM: Gainesville Department of Water Resources
SUBJECT: Hydrant Meter Operation Procedures
DATE: October 25, 2022
CC:

**Procedures for
Operation of Fire Hydrants
During Use of a Hydrant Meter**

To prevent damage to fire hydrants, the following procedures should be followed when a hydrant meter is used.

1. Prior to installation of a hydrant meter, close the gate valve completely using a valve wrench;
2. Remove fire hydrant cap and install the hydrant meter;
3. Open fire hydrant completely using a hydrant wrench;
4. Control flow rate of fire hydrant with the gate valve using valve wrench;
5. Once usage task is complete, close the gate valve completely using a valve wrench;
6. Once operation is complete, remove the hydrant meter and replace hydrant cap;
7. Close fire hydrant completely using a hydrant wrench; and
8. Open gate valve completely using a valve wrench.

Never use a fire hydrant if an "Out of Service" tag is present or if there is no gate valve on the hydrant. For information on hydrant meter rental call 770-535-6878. For additional instructions on operational procedures, call 770-535-6881.

Following these procedures should minimize damages to fire hydrant assemblies and fire hydrant valves during the use of a hydrant meter.

3-WAY FIRE HYDRANT WITH 4-1/2" VALVE
 OPENING. MUELLER A-421 M.J.,
 AMERICAN-DARLING MK-73-2 M.J.,
 M&H 129 M.J. OR U.S. PIPE
 METROFLOW/M-03 M.J.

