

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE
Schedule and Procedure Guidelines for
Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Private Fire Hydrants

Owners of private fire service mains and their appurtenances will provide inspection, testing, and maintenance as required in the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code, NFPA 25, and NFPA 291 following the schedule below:

Inspection, Test and Maintenance Schedule:

1. New Installation, Annually, and After Use
 - a. Clear weeds and obstructions
 - b. Inspect hydrant caps and threads
 - c. Perform barrel flow
 - d. Check for drainage
 - e. Paint hydrant as needed
2. New Installation and Every Five Years
 - a. Annual maintenance (outlined above)
 - b. Hydrant Flow Test, submit on provided form

Inspection, Test and Maintenance Guidelines:

The following inspection, testing, and maintenance activities shall be performed in accordance with NFPA 25 *Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*. Copies of NFPA standards may be obtained from the National Fire Protection Association, telephone 1-800-344-3555 or website: www.catalog.nfpa.org.

Initial and Annually:

1. Keep all weeds and obstruction a minimum of three feet in all directions from the base of the hydrant. Obstructions such as fences, shrubs, and mailboxes shall be removed or relocated.
2. Hydrants shall be at grade level.
3. Remove all rust and scale from caps and threads with appropriate tools. Chains may be removed from caps so as to hamper the operation of the hydrant.
4. Inspect all hydrant caps and threads and lubricate with a light coat of grease, if needed. Gaskets shall be inspected and replaced as necessary.
5. Test barrel flow:
 - a. Check hydrant to see which nozzle is the best to use to discharge the water.
 - b. Look to see what can or will be damaged by the flow. Examples: parked vehicles, pedestrians, landscape, gravel, dirt, mulch, or other loose materials in the area.
 - c. Check to see where the discharge water is going to drain to avoid flooding the street, yard, etc.
 - d. Remove cap from the selected nozzle and install flow diffuser if needed.
 - e. Tighten the caps on the other two nozzles.
 - f. *Slowly*, open the hydrant completely or to the amount that conditions will permit. Flow water until clear, approx. 1 – 2 minutes. Water will be clear enough to see through, not cloudy.

- g. Close hydrant *slowly*.
 - h. After Closing the hydrant, observe drainage from the barrel through the 4 ½" cap. If it is not draining, *replace all caps* and slowly open the hydrant completely to flush out the barrel drains. *Slowly* shut down the hydrant completely, remove the cap and check for drainage of the barrel. *Caution: make sure the pressure is off of the barrel when removing the cap so it does not hit someone or something.* Hydrants requiring more than 24 hours to drain shall be repaired.
 - i. If the barrel is draining properly then complete other maintenance as needed.
6. Upon completion, replace all caps (wrench tight) to prevent removal by others or objects being placed in the barrel.
7. Paint, as needed, the fire hydrant(s) as follows:
- a. Caps and bonnet- Royal Blue Rust-Oleum #7727
 - b. Barrel- Regal Red Rust-Oleum #7765

Hydrant Flow Test, Initially and every 5 years:

- 1. Hydrant flow test shall be performed using an appropriate hydrant cap and pressure gauge.
- 2. Refer to NFPA 291 for more information.
- 3. Fill out and submit the test data on the Virginia Beach Fire Prevention Bureau Private Fire Hydrant Flow Test & Inspection form.

CAUTION

WATER PRESSURE WITHIN PRIVATE FIRE HDYRANTS ARE HIGH AND CAN CAUSE DAMAGE AND/OR INJURY. ANYONE OPERATING, MAINTAINING OR TESTING A FIRE HDYRANT SHOULD BE PROPERLY TRAINED. ALWAYS OPEN AND CLOSE A HYDRANT *SLOWLY* TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO YOUR HYDRANT AND WATER SYSTEM. ALWAYS USE AN APPROVED HYDRANT WRENCH. KNOW WHERE YOUR WATER SHUT-OFF VALVES ARE LOCATED IN CASE OF FIRE HDYRANT MALFUNCTION.

REMOVAL OF OR TAMPERING WITH FIRE HYDRANTS

IT SHALL BE UNLAWFUL FOR ANY PERSON TO REMOVE, TAMPER WITH, OR OTHERWISE DISTURB A FIRE HYDRANT SYSTEM EXCEPT FOR THE PURPOSE OF INSPECTION, TESTING, MAINTNENACE, MAKING NECESSARY REPAIRS, OR WHERE APPROVED BY THE FIRE CODE OFFICIAL.