



March 1, 2021

RE: NOTICE – 2021 Private Hydrant Identification Initiative

All Property Manager(s), and/or Owner(s):

All private hydrants within Orange Beach, AL city limits shall be properly identified independent of the public hydrant color scheme of RED. This identification method will assist all parties in better understanding fire hydrant inspection, testing and maintenance (ITM) responsibility. The Orange Beach Fire Department is committed to working with property owners in 2021 to initially paint all private hydrants YELLOW within the city to develop a baseline. (The product of choice is highlighted on the attached technical data sheet.) Any subsequent fire hydrant painting will be the responsibility of the property owner or property representative. *Note: Though we will be assisting in the initial painting of private hydrants, we will NOT be conducting any inspection, testing and maintenance (ITM) of private fire hydrants. This ITM shall be conducted by your fire protection contractor of choice.*

International Fire Code (2018 edition):

Section 507.5.7 Insert: “A private service fire hydrant shall be painted yellow in color. The valve stem, coupling threads, or portions of the hydrant where the application of paint would violate the listing of the hydrant or hinder its operation shall not be painted.”

Fire hydrants are a necessary component for fire protection and the ability of fire departments to be able to effectively manage fires. There are two distinct types of fire hydrants: Public Hydrants and Private Hydrants. As a property manager or owner’s representative, it is important to know the difference(s) and responsibilities of the owner for inspection, testing, and maintenance purposes.

PUBLIC HYDRANTS

City hydrants are those that are on public property and the Orange Beach Water Authority (OBWA) is responsible for maintaining the hydrants. They are going to be the most common as they are seen along public streets and property, positioned to allow the fire department to access them easily.

PRIVATE HYDRANTS

Private hydrants are those that are on private property, which are owned and maintained by the owner. Private fire hydrants are required by the International Fire Code to supply the necessary water supply for fire protection. Private fire hydrants are installed when the distance between the building or property and the closest public fire hydrant is too far for the fire department to access to battle a fire.



The purpose for properly identifying private fire hydrants is so that these can be easily identified by responding personnel and adequately maintained by the property owner or representative. Public fire hydrants already receive such maintenance; however, private hydrants may go without maintenance (if not properly identified) for extended periods of time.

INSPECTION, TESTING, & MAINTENANCE (ITM) OF PRIVATE FIRE HYDRANTS

Below are the requirements of NFPA 25, *Standard for Inspection, Testing, & Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems*. Private fire hydrants **shall** be flow tested annually to clear any foreign material from the private service main. This is done because occasionally, rocks or other foreign material can get into the fire line and cause blockages. It also allows the ITM vendor to identify any potential problems before they get worse. Chapter 7 in NFPA 25 covers Private Fire Service Mains and the inspection, testing, and maintenance of private fire hydrants. The items below are an overview and not a comprehensive list of everything that should be completed.

INSPECTION

- Inspect annually and after each operation
- Exposed piping shall be inspected annually
- Underground piping should be inspected per 7.2.2.2

TESTING

- Hydrants shall be flowed annually
- Each hydrant shall be opened fully and water flowed until all foreign material has cleared and flow shall be maintained for not less than 1 minute.
- After operation, dry barrel and wall hydrants shall be observed for proper drainage from the barrel and should take no longer than 60 minutes to fully drain.
- Exposed and underground piping shall be flow tested at a minimum of 5-year intervals

MAINTENANCE

- Hydrants shall be lubricated annually to ensure that all stems, caps, plugs, and threads are in proper operating condition
- Hydrants shall be kept free any growth or debris and protected against mechanical damage so that free access is ensured.

Please contact our office if you have any questions about this program.

City of
Orange Beach
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Fire Department



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