

# THE Mainstream

## Annual Fire Hydrant Inspections

Beginning September 8th, YCUA will perform its annual winterization of the over 3,000 fire hydrants in its system, including a check of their operation for fire protection. The procedure involves an employee completing an inspection of the internal workings of each fire hydrant, making repairs, and removing water from the hydrant barrels to prevent freezing. YCUA will also flush or run each fire hydrant to make sure that it will operate properly during an emergency.

As part of this process, each fire hydrant is tagged with a ribbon to indicate that the winterization has been completed. The color of the ribbon changes each year and, this

year, the color pink was selected.

Area residents should be advised that, as crews flush fire hydrants, there may be some discoloration of the water. If rust-colored water is experienced, simply run the cold water tap for a few minutes to let the water clear. Please keep in mind not to wash any light colored

clothing until the water is running clear.

The rust coloring is caused by a natural buildup of minerals in the water system.

The fire hydrant inspection program helps ensure that all of our fire hydrants are ready in the event of an emergency. If

you have any questions about the program, please contact YCUA Director of Service Operations Michael Shaffer at 484-4600 ext. 311.



*A tagged fire hydrant, indicating that it has been inspected and winterized.*

## From The Director

*Keeping our customers and employees safe has always been YCUA's top priority. This has been no different during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*Starting in March, as we saw the spread of COVID-19, in accordance with CDC guidelines, YCUA directed all non-operational team members to work remotely if possible, instituted emergency purchasing practices, ensured existing personal protective equipment was maintained and procured additional equipment, and ordered an enhanced cleaning and disinfection plan throughout our facilities. To help area residents whose lives were being disrupted, YCUA suspended all shutoffs for non-payment for its customers until further notice. All critical and emergency services continued to operate.*

*As the pandemic evolved, so did our response. When we re-opened to the public and returned to normal services, YCUA quickly initiated mask and social-distancing requirements at all YCUA facilities and on work sites, established daily temperature and wellness screenings for YCUA staff, modified shift times to reduce the risk of large groups coming into contact with each other, and made sure employees could seek medical evaluations if sent home with COVID-19 symptoms.*

*We have also begun utilizing a Contagious Virus Response Plan, which can be found at [www.ycua.org](http://www.ycua.org).*

*The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), your tap water source, assures its communities that the water it produces remains of unquestionable quality. GLWA's disinfection and treatment processes are effective in removing viruses, including COVID-19. Your tap water continues to be safe for drinking, cooking, and maintaining personal hygiene during the COVID-19 outbreak. At this time, the risk of transmission through sewage may be possible, however there is no evidence to date that this has occurred.*

*YCUA values you and will continue to work to keep you and our employees safe as we move forward.*

*- Jeff Castro, YCUA Director*

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YPSILANTI COMMUNITY UTILITIES AUTHORITY



[www.ycua.org](http://www.ycua.org)

*- Jeff Castro, YCUA Director*

*YCUA's semiannual newsletter dedicated to enhancing water and wastewater services.*

# Sanitary Sewer Collection System Preventative Maintenance Program

The purpose of YCUA's sanitary sewer collection system preventative maintenance program is to assure that the approximately 230 miles of sewer mains in the YCUA system are in good working condition and functioning as designed. Each year, YCUA crews inspect an estimated 15,000 feet of sewer mains using a closed-circuit television (CCTV) mobile truck, which enables service crews to locate obstructions, failed pipe, roots, soap, fats / oils / grease (FOG), or offsets in the sewer mains that can be identified and scheduled for repair. Vactors, sewer cleaning and vacuuming machines, are used to remove the obstructions found by the CCTV. YCUA's goal for cleaning and flushing is 65,000 feet of sewer mains per month.



*Vactors such as this are used by YCUA to clean about 65,000 feet of sewer mains each month.*

YCUA crews inspect an average of 36,000 sanitary manholes for structural defects and flow each year.

This program greatly reduces sanitary sewer main issues within our system that could potentially affect our customers. If you are experiencing a sewer problem, please notify YCUA so our service crews can inspect the sewer main manholes nearest the affected address. If it is determined that the problem is in the sewer main, YCUA will address the issue. If it is ascertained that the condition of the sewer main is normal, the homeowner is responsible for cleaning their own sanitary service lead.

For more information on sanitary sewer backups, please visit [www.ycua.org](http://www.ycua.org) and click "YCUA Sewer Backup Policy" from either the Residential Customers or Commercial Customers tab of the drop-down menu.

Also as part of the preventative maintenance program,

## National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction

Most people don't realize how often they put themselves in danger doing routine tasks around the house. Did you know that one of the most dangerous heights to fall from is a common household chair? Many use chairs to improvise when they do not have a small step ladder or step stool for changing light bulbs or reaching places for dusting, cleaning, painting, and other household tasks that we do daily. Rarely, does the thought of "Is this safe?" come to mind.



*Photo by Rafael De Lancer from Pexels.*

Ladders are another common household tool but, when used improperly, the outcome can be unfortunate. Using a step ladder when an extension ladder is needed is very common and not opening a step ladder fully to lock the hinged bracing is overlooked far too often.

Here at YCUA, we train our team members often in recognizing fall and trip hazards as well as fall prevention and fall protection. Additionally, we inspect our fall protection devices, harnesses, and ladders at regular intervals.

For several years, YCUA has also been involved in an annual safety stand-down presented by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Every year, new materials, topics, and resources are posted on their website that provide a wealth of training for YCUA staff. We encourage and utilize safe work practices and inspire our staff to exercise the same techniques at home. YCUA would also like to share OSHA's training material with you in hopes that these teachings might make a difference for the better in your home. That information can be found at <https://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown>.



## Always Changing, Always Improving

### This Year's Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades

YCUA is dedicated to continuously providing top quality, cost effective, and environmentally safe water and wastewater services to our customers. With this in mind, YCUA is undertaking the following wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) projects during the current fiscal year.

**WWTP Tertiary Filter Improvement Project:** YCUA has embarked on a major improvement project to its WWTP tertiary filtration system, which removes suspended solids from the secondary effluent that were not removed in the final settling tanks. An ineffective filtration process can adversely affect the downstream disinfection process and the quality of the final effluent discharged to the receiving stream. This project involves

rehabilitation of 12 of the 18 filters in the system that were part of YCUA's original construction in 1982 and have become ineffective over the years. The improved system will greatly enhance YCUA's ability to handle heavy flows and will also improve the quality of the final effluent discharged from the WWTP. First phase of the project is expected to be completed by September 2020 and the final phase by March 2020.

Estimated cost of this project is \$4.7 million



*A crane at the YCUA WWTP removing the roof to allow access to the infrastructure below.*

air emissions control system, making it one of the cleanest air emissions units of its kind. This incinerator system was installed in 2006. Improvements to this system are underway, including removal and replacement of the Venturi scrubber, the primary heat exchanger, and certain expansion joints. The Venturi scrubber removes particulate matter from the flue gas. The primary heat exchanger transfers the heat from the hot flue gasses leaving the reactor and preheats the combustion air in the reactor to reduce the supplementary fuel required. It is designed to preheat fluidizing air while cooling the flue gas, thus acting as an energy recovery unit. Effective functioning of these units is essential in removing the pollutants and energy recovery. This project is expected to be completed by January 2021 at an estimated cost of \$4.3 million.

### YCUA Incinerator Improvement

**Project:** As part of our biosolids management, the YCUA WWTP consists of a fluidized bed incinerator with a four-stage

### Be Mindful of What You Flush During the COVID-19 Pandemic

With the increased use of disinfectant cleaning wipes and “flushable” wipes, it’s time to be mindful about what is flushed down toilets. Wipes behave very differently in sewers than toilet paper, which is designed specifically to disintegrate in water.

Wipes do not break down and have a tendency to entangle with other wipes or



*A YCUA wastewater pump, clogged with wipes.*

waste to create blockages. Blockages can cause sewage to back-up into your home. When this happens, you’ll need to call a plumber to clear the blockage. A back-up in your home may also lead to back-ups throughout your neighborhood.

“Flushable” wipes wreak havoc in sewer systems and can damage pump stations and equipment at the wastewater treatment plant. In 2018, workers in Macomb County removed a 19-ton, 100-foot fatberg, a deposit of fat and grease mixed with wipes. The process cost about \$100,000.

If you really want to use wipes, throw them in the garbage, not your toilet. Even so-called “flushable” wipes are not biodegradable!

**Autumn carries more gold in its pocket than all the other seasons.**

*- Jim Bishop*

## Did You Know?









During the COVID-19 pandemic, protective gloves, masks, and disinfecting wipes are frequently showing up on the ground instead of in trash bins. When it rains, these discarded items can get washed into storm drain grates which lead, unfiltered, to area rivers, possibly reaching the Great Lakes. Some of these materials will last in the environment for years, decades, even centuries. Please, be a good environmental steward and dispose of used personal protective equipment properly.

## It's Time To Winterize!

The time to prepare your home for winter is before the freezing temperatures and snow arrive. Follow these tips to help prevent frozen pipes in your home:



-  Disconnect outdoor hoses and make sure hose bibs are not dripping.
-  Insulate pipes in unheated areas or seal off unheated areas.
-  Find your water meter shutoff so if a break does occur, you can turn off your water service quickly.
-  If you have an in-ground sprinkler system, contact your irrigation professional about scheduling an appointment to have your system thoroughly winterized.
-  If your home's water will be turned off for winter, there should be heat to protect the meter as well as the plumbing.
-  YCUA recommends that customers winterize their homes just in case there is a complete power outage.

## "Get the Lead Out" Webpage Now Online

YCUA is taking a proactive approach to identifying lead service lines with our upcoming "Get the Lead Out" program.



We have launched a new webpage geared toward helping residents understand how lead can enter drinking water from the wearing away of materials in a building's lead plumbing and how to identify the type of service in your home. Visit [www.ycua.org/qualitywater.htm](http://www.ycua.org/qualitywater.htm) for more information.

## Holiday closings

YCUA is closed on the following dates:

November 11 - Veterans' Day  
November 26 & 27 - Thanksgiving  
December 24 & 25 - Christmas  
Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 - New Year

We wish our customers a safe and enjoyable holiday season!



Need more information?

Please visit us at  
[www.ycua.org](http://www.ycua.org)  
or call  
734-484-4600