



LOCATION OF CURB-STOPS AND WATER SERVICES

By Douglas Smorol | Circuit Rider

I get a lot of calls and requests from systems requesting assistance with locating water services and curb-stops. Over time, system personnel change, records are lost, and many times it is just that there has been no need to find or operate the curb-stop. If you do not have maps, location books, or photos it can be a daunting task. So, I will start out by reminding everyone to keep records as good as possible. I love it when I go to a system and they bring out this 4" thick ledger that was started in 1902 and has every location and every update from a hundred years ago. That is probably the exception and not the rule. These days there are so many great tools at your disposal to record these locations, there really is no excuse not to. But even with good records, poles are removed, houses burn down, hydrants are deleted etc., so the need to locate these items will come up again and again.

The first thing I like to try is the Magnetic Locator (battery operated devices that locate ferrous metals). Now depending on the setting (urban or rural) a quick sweep with this device can be very effective. The downside is it will also locate every piece of buried metal, so depending on how much experience you have, this can result in a lot of digging for these buried treasures. Not every system has one of these locators, but they probably should. So, a quick sweep between the road and the sidewalk or the first 20 feet of lawn usually yields good results. No luck here can mean several things, either the lawn mower or the snowplow sheared the top off, or the depth of bury is beyond the capability of the locator. At this point I stay old school and bring out the witching sticks and leave a few dots of paint. I sweep this area for the curb-stop top again just to see if I missed it the first time. If I strike out here, it's time to bring out the heavy artillery. If there is a fire hydrant within 100' I will remove a cap and attach the positive lead (Red) to the brass threads on the hydrant, and the negative lead (Black) to my pin bar that I have driven as deep as I can into the moist soil. I will try to introduce a signal onto the water main that will also energize the water service, keeping in mind that this will only work with piping materials that are a conductor or properly installed PVC, HDPE, or CTS tubing installed with a tracer wire. Just like the witching, I paint the path of the service line, then sweep with my Magnetic Locator. If you do not have a handy place to connect to the main I sometimes have been able to connect my transmitter to an outdoor faucet or hose bib. As long as it is a copper, steel, or lead service and you have a good ground, you can trace from the house to the water main. It is a good bet that if you get a hit

with the magnetic locator near your mark out, it's the curb-stop. Sometimes over time they can settle quite a bit. I have found some at least 2' deep. Don't give up on them just because you think they should be just below the grass, they can be below the sidewalk or paved over in the driveway. It is important for you as utility to know where the customer's curb-stop is, and equally important for the customer to know the location of this critical valve.

Knowing the location of curb-stops and water services can only help you to provide **"Quality on Tap!"** 💧💧