



Measure #: 2026-032

TOWN COUNCIL MEASURE SUBMITTAL

Date: 10/21/2025

Submitted By: Chief Coleman

Telephone #: 508-699-0100

MEASURE DESCRIPTION:

Proposal to adopt a Private Fire Hydrant Bylaw: To establish installation and maintenance standards for fire hydrants located on private property to ensure fire hydrants are in good working order for fire department suppression.

Signed:

Christopher
Coleman

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Date: 2025.10.21 14:20:00-0400
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PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION:

The Town of North Attleboro has multiple residential developments and commercial properties with fire hydrants not maintained by the Water Department as they are classified as Private Fire Hydrants. The North Attleboro Fire Department recently had two incidents where the fire hydrant caps could not be opened as they were seized due to lack of maintenance. The first incident was a structural fire with a person trapped and the second was a brush fire where additional water supply was needed; however, every hydrant in the neighborhood could not be opened except for one. This bylaw will ensure that residential HOA's and commercial property owners inspect, maintain and test their fire hydrants annually and provide documentation of such information to our online data collection reporting software. This bylaw is being drafted to ensure the utmost safety of our residents and ensure we have an adequate water supply during fire conditions.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

ATTACHMENTS: See Attached

REFER TO SUB-COMMITTEE: Bylaw Sub-Committee

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PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION CONTINUED:

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Private Fire Hydrant By-Law

Section 1: Purpose

To establish installation and maintenance standards for fire hydrants located on private property to ensure fire hydrants are in good working order for fire suppression and fire department operations.

Section 2: Definitions

Hydrant: The above-ground appliance (as defined by the National Fire Protection Association) used to provide a water supply to fire apparatus in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Private Fire Hydrant: A fire hydrant within a private residential or commercial development whose water may or may not be provided by the Town, but the underground piping in which the water moves, and the hydrants are owned and maintained by the property or system owner.

Private Fire Service Main: The pipe and appurtenances on private property that convey water from the water service connection for fire protection or suppression purposes.

Hydrant Owner: The person, association or entity (or their designee) according to Town records, that is responsible for real estate tax payments (or other payments to the Town) for the property on which the hydrant is installed.

Hydrant Maintenance: The process of regular maintenance of a fire hydrant to determine its capability to provide the desired water supply for which it was designed to exercise all valves, caps, etc., and to lubricate and paint as needed.

Section 3: Plan Review

Any new construction for a proposed residential or commercial building or project or expansion of an existing residential or commercial building or project on private property (hereinafter, the "Project") shall require plan review by the Fire Chief or his/her designee and the Director of the Public Works Department or his/her designee ("Director") for an assessment of the Project's fire protection needs. Such assessment may require the applicant/property owner to cause a study to be conducted of the adequacy of water flow and pressure in the immediate vicinity of the Project. If the Fire Chief or his/her designee or the

Director of the Public Works Department or his/her designee determines that the public water infrastructure is not sufficient to support the fire protection needs of the Project, the Fire Chief (or designee) may require the installation of additional fire hydrants on private property within the Project (“Private Hydrant”).

Section 4: Initial Installation

- a. The North Attleboro Public Works Department (the “Department”) shall oversee the installation of all Private Hydrants, and all installations shall conform to all applicable Department standards.
- b. Failure to meet the Department standards may result in the denial of a temporary or final occupancy permit by the Building Inspector.
- c. Upon installation and before the flowing of any water via a newly installed Private Hydrant, the Water Division of the Department of Public Works shall be contacted and shall inspect the Private Hydrant. No water shall be allowed to flow through any Private Hydrant without documentation by the Department of Public Works and a determination by the Fire Chief and the Public Works Director that the Private Hydrant complies with all applicable standards, rules, and regulations.

Section 5: Identification of Private Fire Hydrants

Private Hydrants shall be painted as follows and shall be re-painted by the owner periodically as needed:

- a. Barrel: Safety Yellow
- b. Caps: Black
- c. Bonnet: White

Section 6: Applicable Codes

NFPA 25 Standard for the Inspection, Testing and Maintenance for Water-Based Fire Protection Systems shall apply to any Private Hydrants installed hereunder.

Section 7: Private Fire Service Mains:

- a. Private Hydrants and Service Main shall be tested annually by the Property Owner to ensure proper functioning, and proof of such testing shall be provided to the Fire Chief.
- b. Each Private hydrant shall be opened fully and water flowed until all foreign material has cleared.
- c.

Private Hydrants shall be lubricated annually to ensure that all stems, caps, plugs, and threads are in proper operating condition.

- d. Underground and exposed piping shall be flow tested at a minimum of 5-year standards.
- e. Any flow test results that indicate deterioration of available waterflow and pressure shall be investigated to the complete satisfaction of the Fire Chief or his/her Designee to ensure that the required flow and pressure are available for protection.

Section 8: Maintenance

1. Once installed, the Property Owner shall ensure that any Private Hydrants are inspected regularly, but in no event less than once annually, to ensure satisfactory operation with a copy of any inspection report to be provided to the Fire Chief forthwith.
2. The inspection shall be performed to meet the applicable standard for hydrant inspection standards, and include, at a minimum:
 - a. Verify ability to find hydrants, debris cleared
 - b. Verify ability to open hydrants
 - c. Verify ability to utilize hydrant for fire protection or maintenance purposes.
 - d. Verify hydrant drains properly
 - e. Reasonably assess the status of paint, and repaint, if necessary
 - f. Lubricate all caps with food grade grease
 - g. Confirm auxiliary valve is open
 - h. Confirm a measured clearance of no less than fourteen inches between the bottom of all connections and the ground or installed base.
 - i. Tag inoperable hydrants with a clearly visible mark.
3. The Department of Public Works – Water Division shall be contacted prior to the flowing of any water via private fire hydrants.

4. The Fire Department shall be notified if such a water flow could also result in receipt of a false alarm from an installed fire suppression system.
5. Private Hydrants shall be clearly marked and kept free from debris, including but not limited to, snow, leaves and other landscaping material.

Section 9: Reporting Requirements

- a. Any inspection or other reports required by this Ordinance shall be submitted to the North Attleboro Fire Department through the Department's cloud-based third-party software portal.

Section 10: Notification and Access

1. The Fire Department shall be contacted regarding any Private Hydrant that is taken out of service immediately upon discovery of the issue placing the hydrant out of service.
2. Upon completion of any work performed on a Private Hydrant, prior to placing a Private Hydrant back in service, the Water Division of the Department shall be contacted and shall inspect the Private Hydrant. No water shall be allowed to flow through any Private Hydrant without documentation by the Department of the inspection and a determination by the Fire Chief and Director that the Private Hydrant complies with all applicable standards, rules and regulations.
3. In accordance with M.G.L. Ch.148, Section 27A no person will shut off, disconnect, remove or disable a private hydrant without the approval of the Fire Chief or his/her designee or the Director of the Public Works Department or his/her designee.
4. The Department of Public Works shall have access onto properties containing Private Hydrants, as necessary, for the purposes of inspecting for leaks.

Section 11: Fines, Penalties. Failure to Inspect, or Repair

1. The penalty/fines for violation of this Ordinance shall be as follows:
 - a. Failure to maintain Private Hydrants in compliance with this Ordinance - **\$300**
 - b. Failure to notify the Water Division, Department of Public Works, and the Fire Department of failed Private Hydrants and failure to furnish a repair plan - **\$300**

- c. Failure to mark and/or clear snow from hydrants - **\$100**
 - d. Failure to remove landscape material(s) from hydrant - **\$300**
 - e. Failure to notify the Water Division, Department of Public Works, and the Fire Department 24 hours before performing maintenance procedures - **\$100**
2. Violations of this Ordinance may be enforced by the Fire Chief or his/her Designee
3. Prior to commencing enforcement action for a violation of this Ordinance, the enforcing person shall give the property owner a 30 day written notice to comply with the Ordinance. Each day a hydrant is not in compliance with this Ordinance , and each Private Hydrant found to be in violation of this Ordinance , shall constitute a separate offense. All penalties and fines shall be payable to the Town's General Fund. Enforcement of this Ordinance may be made pursuant to the General Laws, c. 40, sec. 21D, and the Town's General Code , Article I.