

Village of Howard Water Leak Detection- March 2014

In the upcoming weeks the Village of Howard Water Department will be piloting a tracer technology system to detect and pinpoint leaks in its buried water mains. In this initial phase, we will be using the technology in your neighborhood and you may see technicians walking around the neighborhood or in your front yard using special testing equipment.

How does it work?

We will be using a tracer technology utilizing helium as the trace material. This technology involves the addition of small quantities of helium into the piped water network. Helium is a noble gas, is odorless, colorless, tasteless, non-toxic and will not affect the quality of the water. Helium is the gas used in party balloons everyone is familiar with. This dissolves in the water and where ever water leaks are present in the piped water network, the dissolved helium leaks out along the water. The helium quickly separates from the water and rises through the soil to the surface. Trained technicians with specialized detection equipment then detect the elevated level of helium to identify and pinpoint the leak location for repair.

May I still drink & use my water?

YES – Absolutely!

Helium is a naturally occurring element and is the second most abundant element in the universe. The atmosphere we breathe contains 5 parts per million helium concentrations. Helium is an approved food additive and the product used for this project is National Sanitary Foundation ANSI 60- standard certified for drinking water use. This technology has been used safely and effectively in both the United States and Europe and the project has been reviewed and approved by the Village of Howard & the Department of Natural Resources.

Why are we doing this?

Village of Howard Water Dept. loses 20% of its water produced through pipe leaks. By reducing this waste we can improve the efficiency of water system operation, reduce costs and potentially pass the savings on to you our customer. Collateral benefits include the reduction of CO2 related emissions through reduced pumping electricity use thus enhancing conservation of resources and benefiting the environment.

