

Shutting Off Your Main Valve

Loss Control, Water Damage Prevention, 2

Knowing **how** and **where** to shut off your church's main water supply is just as important as knowing how to turn off or reset an electric breaker or replace a fuse. Your church is required to have a main water shut-off valve installed. For most emergencies or repairs, knowing how to shut off the main water supply is critical. Having emergency water damage guidelines in place can help prevent extensive water damage and disruption to your ministry. Begin by taking the following steps to assess your church property and have procedures in place when water leaks occur.

Understanding Your Church's Plumbing Arrangement

It is important to understand that different plumbing arrangements will dictate where the proper main supply valve is located:

- Maintenance personnel are usually responsible for turning off the main water valve during normal hours of operation before beginning remediation services from water damage restoration companies. However, when leaks happen at unusual times such as during the night or on weekends, other personnel may not know what to do.
- Contact a registered master plumber to inspect and explain plumbing arrangement.
- Develop a plan to address emergency water damage and train personnel.
- Your church may have the water meter located inside, while others are located outside, underground within a "pit" at or near the property line or right-of-way.
- Construction and plumbing from one house of worship to another varies greatly; some may have basements, crawl-spaces, or slab-on-grade.
- Water shut-off valves may have round "wheel" handles or lever handles.

Identifying the Valve

- Identify where the broken pipe is located to determine if a water valve is near the source rather than on a lower floor or utility closet.
- Turning off water valves as quickly as possible prevents primary damage to surfaces in addition to secondary damage from mold and mildew.
- If your building has a fire sprinkler system, care is needed when selecting the shut-off valve.
- Unless it is a sprinkler pipe which is leaking, you should only shut-off the church's plumbing supply and leave the sprinkler piping charged/live.
- Contact a registered master plumber to assist in labeling proper valves and knowing when and how to use them in an emergency.

Closing the main valve (Shut-off/Turn-off)

- Round "wheel" handle valves will turn-off by turning the handle to the right (clockwise). It may take 2 or more full revolutions.
- Slowly turn level handle valves $\frac{1}{4}$ turn, until the handle is not parallel with the pipe. It should stop at a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn.
- Open a tub or sink faucet (hot & cold), on the highest level to relieve pressure and watch that spout to ensure a full shut-down. Then continue to open faucets to drain-down as needed.
- If draining down, be sure to de-energize the water heater and boiler where applicable by shutting off their power.
- Contact a registered master plumber to assist.

Source: [National Disaster Recovery](#)