

Experiences Related to Houston Public Works – Drinking Water Operations – Winter Storm Uri

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Abstract

In February 2021 during winter storm Uri, the City of Houston saw extremely large water demand, based on how much water was being produced and sent out from our water plants. Unfortunately, that water was not going to residents. Due to the large number of burst pipes, that water was leaking onto City streets. Due to the large number of leaks, system pressures dropped and plunged the City into a Boil Water Notice at the very time residents were not able to boil water because of lack of electricity.

This paper will address some of the events during the storm, as well as next steps being pursued by Drinking Water Operations (DWO) for the future of the utility.

Some of the challenges that were noted during the event are:

- Technologies that don't speak to each other;
- GIS asset designation limitations;
- Lack of records to locate service lines
- The response cycle of leaks