

LANDOWNERS GUIDE

Tampa Bay Water Easements



Pipelines Deliver For The Region

Most of the water supplied in the Tampa Bay region comes from Tampa Bay Water. Every day, Tampa Bay Water delivers 180 million gallons of water to more than 2.5 million people through its member governments – Hillsborough County, Pasco County, Pinellas County, New Port Richey, St. Petersburg and Tampa. All of that water is pumped across the region through a 250-mile underground network of pipes that connect our ground, surface and seawater supply facilities with pumping stations, treatment plants and the local government utilities we serve.

Some of the pipes in this essential network are located in public rights-of-way, but most are located on privately owned property within easements that Tampa Bay Water purchased.

As the Tampa Bay region continues to grow, so does our drinking water supply and delivery system. That means exploring new water sources and building pipelines to connect our ever-growing region.

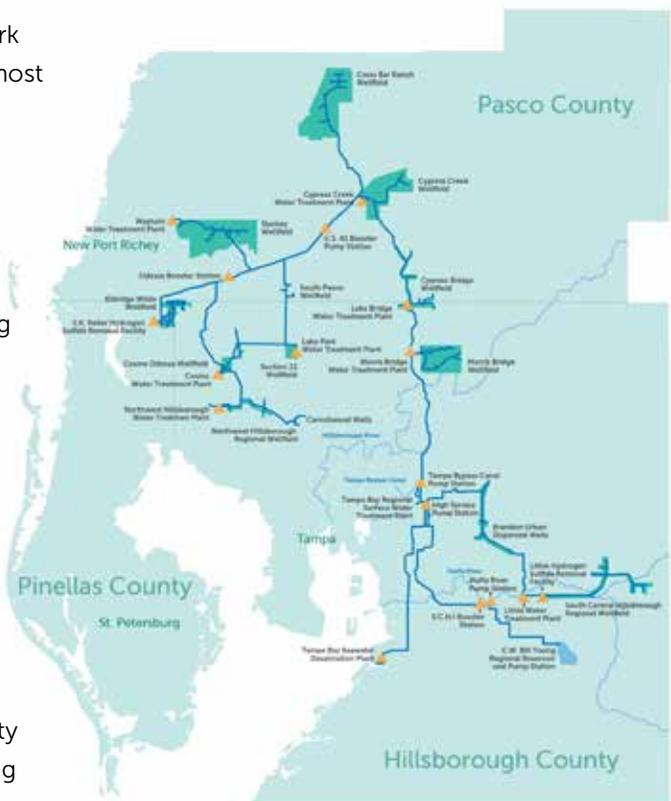
Easements Provide a Public Service

An easement is a portion of a land parcel that is used for public or private services, such as water, sewer or storm water pipelines, or utility grids (for power, telephone or cable TV). While the property owner retains ownership of the underlying land, rights to the land are shared by the property owner and another party, such as a private utility or government agency.

Easements remain regardless of the transfer of the underlying land. Without easements, utility providers like Tampa Electric, Frontier, Spectrum, TECO Peoples Gas and Tampa Bay Water can't serve their customers.

For Tampa Bay Water, easements serve as corridors for our water supply pipelines.

All Tampa Bay Water facilities and pipelines located within an easement follow rigorous review and construction procedures to ensure long-term successful performance. They are designed, permitted, constructed, operated and maintained according to federal, state and local laws, regulation and safety codes.



Tampa Bay Water's 250-mile pipeline network connects water sources with treatment and pumping facilities and the six local governments we serve.

Easements allow communities, residents and businesses access to the services utilities provide.



If an easement is needed, Tampa Bay Water land agents meet with property owners to purchase options at fair market value.

Selecting Pipeline Routes

New pipelines are sometimes needed to accommodate growth or ensure reliability. When a new pipeline is needed, Tampa Bay Water's planners and engineers review several potential corridors. We evaluate land characteristics, environmental concerns, land availability and proximity to supply sources, treatment plants, pumping stations and key locations where the finished water can be easily delivered to the local government utilities we serve.

After corridors are identified, Tampa Bay Water refines potential routes within those corridors. We try to locate pipelines, or portions of pipelines, with other existing facilities, such as power lines and roads, to minimize inconvenience to private property owners and reduce environmental effects.

All identified routes are then evaluated against numerous criteria, such as:

- Pipeline length
- Public inconvenience and public input
- Safety
- Major road and water crossings
- Soil considerations
- Permitting and construction duration
- Right-of-way/easement availability
- Operation and maintenance accessibility
- Environment and wetlands
- Long-range planning
- Cost

Proposed routes are ranked and brought before the Tampa Bay Water board of directors for approval. Typically, the top-ranked route is approved for design, permitting, property acquisition and construction.

Obtaining Easement Property

If a property is within an approved pipeline route, Tampa Bay Water land agents will meet with the property owner to discuss easement purchase options at a fair market value. We follow an established consistent and efficient approach to the agreement process, including pricing based on a fair market value of the property.

After the property owner and the Tampa Bay Water board of directors both approve the purchase agreement, a closing process will take place followed by final documents being recorded in county public records.

As a last resort, when terms of negotiation cannot be resolved, Tampa Bay Water has the legal authority to acquire the designated land through eminent domain, a court process established to allow government agencies to acquire private property for public use with just compensation. The property owner is notified of his or her rights and given a proper amount of time to respond.

Easements are perpetual and include information about how the property owner may use the land within an easement. When selling property with an easement, the owner must disclose the presence of a Tampa Bay Water easement to the buyer.



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A typical Tampa Bay Water easement can range 30-60 feet in width and has above-ground features, like air release valves or water quality stations, located strategically along the route.

Typical Easement Characteristics

There are usually two parts to an easement—a permanent easement and a temporary easement. A typical permanent easement can range 30-60 feet in width. Whenever possible, an easement for a pipeline corridor is located on the edge or boundary of a property to minimize impacts to property owners. A permanent easement typically requires:

- Unobstructed access points and areas for maintenance vehicles and equipment to enter the property to service and inspect facilities once operational.
- Some permanent above-ground features strategically located along a pipeline route that are needed for proper operations and maintenance, such as valve boxes, air release valves, water quality and pipeline testing stations and blow-off valves; all of which are protected by yellow bollards (posts).

A temporary easement is additional land needed only during construction for equipment and supplies. A temporary construction easement can range 25-50 feet in width and is released back to the property owner to use at his or her discretion after construction is completed and the site restored.

What is allowed on a permanent easement?

When Tampa Bay Water purchases an easement, the property owner retains usage rights, depending on the easement's location, size and purpose. Once construction is complete, the permanent easement must be accessible for maintenance vehicles to inspect the pipeline and easement area when necessary.

No object or structure that restricts Tampa Bay Water's access to the site is permitted. Specific acceptable and unacceptable uses are outlined in writing during property negotiations. Acceptable uses usually include:

- Fences with gates to allow access to the easement
- Green spaces
- Pavement for driveways or parking areas
- Moderately sized shrubs, plantings and small gardens

What is not allowed on an easement?

Because no object or structure can restrict Tampa Bay Water's access to the site, the following items are not allowed on a permanent easement:

- Above-ground permanent structures, junction boxes, conduit duct banks, storm drainage pipes, foundations, storage tanks or buildings, or underground structures such as vaults
- Trees with deep roots
- Concrete walls
- Stockpiles of materials in excess of 500 pounds per square foot exceeding 10 feet high
- Stormwater ponds, borrow pits or irrigation systems placed more than 18 inches below ground

Tampa Bay Water reviews requests for exceptions on a case-by-case basis.



Tampa Bay Water respects your property and the environment. Construction can be time-consuming and inconvenient, but we work hard to be a good neighbor through the entire process.

What to Expect During Pipeline Construction

Tampa Bay Water realizes that construction takes time and is not always convenient, so we do our very best to be a good neighbor. We follow strict, established guidelines for pipeline construction that legally require all work to be performed in a safe, responsible, and cost-effective manner. Installing a pipeline is done in three phases: pre-construction, construction and restoration.

Pre-Construction

Before any construction can begin, our consultants first produce a construction management plan that outlines:

- Construction schedule and procedures
- Contractor responsibilities to follow the schedule and procedures
- Safety, traffic and erosion control methods throughout construction
- Construction operating hours
- Transportation routes for all construction equipment
- Environmental measures to protect trees, wetlands and sensitive areas
- Restoration procedures at construction completion
- Emergency response procedures in the event of an accident at the construction site
- Responsibilities for ongoing communication and coordination with underlying utility owners and adjacent property owners, public works staff, law enforcement and emergency response teams in local jurisdictions where pipelines are constructed

Once Tampa Bay Water approves the construction management plan, the contractor applies for building permits if they are required for the project. The contractor then installs erosion and sediment controls in the construction area, barricades significant trees for protection, and installs field stakes to mark wetland boundaries. Sediment control, such as stormwater drain filters, keep construction materials and debris from entering sensitive areas or roadways during heavy storms. The contractor tapes off any environmentally sensitive areas identified in the design plans to keep construction from disturbing these areas. When necessary, the contractor will also place barricades and safety fences along the immediate area of trench excavation. Throughout all construction phases, state and local regulatory agencies are permitted to visit the site to inspect all erosion and sediment control facilities and environmental protection measures.



Construction

Once all final permitting and site preparation is completed, construction equipment is brought on site and work begins. Trees and brush are cleared from the permanent and temporary easements, and excavation equipment digs trenches.

Trenches for pipelines must be roughly twice as wide as the diameter of the pipe being installed. For example, a 36-inch pipe requires a 6-9-foot wide trench. The extra width allows the contractor to stabilize the sides of the trench with a trench box to keep workers safe. Sometimes the contractor will place a bed of gravel on the trench floor to stabilize the weight of the pipe as it's installed.

Crews use special equipment to connect the pipe sections and seal the joints. As the pipe is installed, part of the excavated soil is returned to the trench and packed around the pipe. Generally, pipelines are covered with 4-5 feet of cover from the top of the pipe to the top of the ground. As the soil is backfilled around the pipe, the contractor compacts it to prevent settlement. Under normal working conditions, the contractor can install approximately 100 feet of pipe a day.

After the pipeline is installed, the contractor conducts pressure tests to ensure that no leaks exist and all connections are properly sealed. Water pressure in a drinking water supply pipelines must comply with all federal, state and local regulations, as well as the standards the design engineers set. Once all test results are approved, the remaining soil is placed in the pipeline trench to its full depth, and the ground is leveled to its original position.

Restoration

The excavated site is now ready to be restored, usually by grading, seeding and mulching it. In some instances, the site may be sodded, sidewalks may be rebuilt, or driveways may be repaired.

It can take 12-24 months from the start of construction for the site to be restored and approved. Once approved, the pipeline is placed into operation.

Generally, Tampa Bay Water restores paving, utility lines, sidewalks and other features that were present before we acquired the easement.



Photo courtesy of AMERICAN SpiralWeld Pipe.

Once a pipeline is placed in operations, the permanent easement must be accessible for crews to inspect and maintain the pipeline, valves and sensors as needed.

What to Expect During Pipeline Operations

Tampa Bay Water's pipelines are designed and constructed to deliver water for decades. To protect the longevity of this critical water supply infrastructure, Tampa Bay Water monitors its pipeline network continually from its Cypress Creek control center. Sensors throughout our system provide regular data on system pressure, flow rates and water quality.

In addition to monitoring, we perform regular inspections and maintenance activities. That's why continuous access to a pipeline easement is so important. Crews need to access the pipeline and above-ground features periodically to inspect valves and sensors. In the unlikely event that a leak is detected, crews make immediate repairs.

If maintenance activities disturb the permanent easement, Tampa Bay Water will restore the area to its post-construction condition. Any encroachments on the easement will not be replaced or restored.

More Information on Easements

As a landowner, one important reference for your property is your deed. You can also learn more about your property from land ownership records your local government maintains. When property is purchased, a title search will reveal any recorded easements and other encumbrances such as mortgages, assessments and liens. Easement areas are also shown on the property site's survey.

Easements are critical to connecting essential public water supplies with local governmental utilities. If you have questions or concerns regarding an easement, please contact Tampa Bay Water's public information office at 866-INFO-H2O (866-463-6420) or visit us at tampabaywater.org.

Who is Tampa Bay Water?

Tampa Bay Water is a regional water supply authority created in 1998 by an interlocal agreement among its member governments — Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas counties, and the cities of New Port Richey, St. Petersburg and Tampa — to be the region's wholesale water supplier. We find, develop and sell high-quality drinking water to our member governments at cost while working to protect our water supply sources in a responsible, efficient and environmentally sustainable manner. The six government utilities then deliver that water to more than 2.5 million people in the tri-county area.

Tampa Bay Water's nine-member board shares voting rights equitably among the three counties, comprising two elected commissioners from each member county and one elected representative from each member city.

Our diverse water supply system includes groundwater from the Floridan Aquifer, surface water from the Hillsborough River, Alafia River and Tampa Bypass Canal, as well as desalinated seawater from Tampa Bay.



**TAMPA
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WATER**

Supplying Water To The Region

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