

Press Release
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PRESS RELEASE

Saturday, October 30, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City to Report on Water Pipe Cross-Connection Monday

Statement from Gulf Breeze City Manager Samantha Abell:

By the close of business Monday, November 1, the City of Gulf Breeze will issue the results of its 10-day investigation into an accidental cross-connection between a residential sewer line and a Midway Water System transmission main that was discovered and corrected October 18. The Ten-Day After-Action Report (AAR) will be sent to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), which has oversight and enforcement authority over this matter, to aid them in their ongoing regulatory review.

There has been a lot of finger-pointing, speculating – and in some cases false information – circulating about this incident. We believe this report will correct and clarify the record.

The incident response, which involved a private residential contractor, Brown Construction, the City of Gulf Breeze, the Midway water utility, and the Santa Rosa County Department of Emergency Management, has been overseen at the state level by FDEP and the Florida Department of Health (FDOH). Once the FDEP [launched a community webpage](#) so residents have access to the latest information on the sampling data and response activities, the City began directing all media to the FDEP page and the City has focused its efforts on providing mutual aid and investigating the matter.

The City has taken an active role in independently communicating with the public, the news media, and all of the government agencies involved in this incident. For example, within hours of being notified of the cross connection, City representatives attended a public meeting with Midway water customers on the evening of October 18 to answer questions based on the information known. The following day, the City issued a press release with additional information, including where to find updates on the situation.

We understand the urgency to find out how such a thing could happen and to ensure that it never happens again. We understand the legitimate interest of the public, the news media, and all of our employees, and partner organizations. However, we especially understand the need to ensure we have the facts, and we believe the City's forthcoming report will provide facts with transparency and accountability into the incident and into our investigation.

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