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West Virginia American Water Issues Alert on Water Theft, Equipment Tampering and Worker Harassment

Huntington, W.Va. (Sept. 14, 2017) –West Virginia American Water today issued a strong reminder that unauthorized use of utility services, tampering with utility equipment, and assaulting utility workers performing their public service duties are serious crimes punishable by substantial fines and/or imprisonment.

On a recent service call in Huntington, a West Virginia American Water employee experienced threats and intimidation by residents when the employee attempted to shut water off to a home with an illegal water service connection. The property's water meter showed repeated instances of water theft, and a lock previously placed on the meter had been cut off. Fortunately, the employee reacted quickly by escaping pursuit and locking herself in her vehicle and then reported the threatening behavior to local law enforcement.

“The safety of our employees is of utmost importance, and we will not tolerate aggressive, intimidating, or threatening behavior toward our West Virginia American Water team members carrying out their duties,” said West Virginia American Water president Brian Bruce.

“Furthermore, when theft and tampering occur, all customers must pay the costs associated with lost water and replacing broken or stolen equipment. We will pursue charges against perpetrators to the fullest extent of the law.”

West Virginia American Water reminds customers that unauthorized water use includes:

- Opening valves at the curb or meter that have been turned off by company personnel
- Bypassing, removing, disabling or adjusting water meters
- Breaking, picking or damaging shut-off locks
- Connecting to or intentionally damaging water lines, valves or other equipment to receive water service that is not measured through a meter and/or is not being billed
- Using unmetered fire hydrants for construction, swimming pool filling, tanker truck filling, or any other purposes apart from West Virginia American Water employees for maintenance purposes and fire department personnel for firefighting

If you are aware of any of these activities in your neighborhood, please report them to West Virginia American Water at 1-800-685-8660. If any of these situations preexisted at your property and you were unaware that it was considered theft of service, please contact us so that we can help guide you through correcting the matter. West Virginia American Water reminds customers that it follows Public Service Commission regulations for water utilities on performing water shutoffs and locking services where theft is suspected.

West Virginia American Water, a subsidiary of American Water (NYSE: AWK), is the largest water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water services to approximately 550,000 people. Founded in 1886, American Water is the largest publicly traded U.S. water and wastewater utility company. The company employs more than 6,700 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater and other related services to an estimated 15 million people in 47 states and Ontario, Canada. More information can be found at www.westvirginiaamwater.com.

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