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Firm pleads guilty to stealing water

A Whitchurch-Stouffville company will have to flush \$500 in fines for stealing water from a King Township hydrant last year in the first case of the township pursuing a case of water theft through the courts.

Ontario Hydro Vac pleaded guilty to the water theft in a Newmarket courtroom last week, according to a release from the Township of King. The company faced a fine that ranged from \$100 all the way up to \$50,000.

We take the issue of water theft extremely seriously," said Kathryn Moyle, Township Clerk and Director of Clerks and Bylaw. "It poses a serious health and safety risk and costs the municipality lost revenue.

Township staff noticed that somebody had illegally hooked up to a hydrant on Melrose Avenue in King City on Oct. 29, 2015. They

took a picture of the hookup, including the truck being used. That enabled bylaw officers to investigate and eventually lay a charge of using a municipal hydrant without a permit.

John Vandenberg, King Township's water and wastewater compliance engineering technologist, said there are negative impacts to water system due to illegal hook-ups:

- · Contamination of the drinking water through pressure reduction or back siphonage.
- Failure of hydrant(s) in fire situations due to damage caused by unauthorized access.
- Overall damage to municipal water infrastructure through improper operation of the
- · Cost to the municipality due to lost revenue from the stolen water.

King is asking people to contact the municipality if they see suspicious activity around fire hydrants.



