

## Ernie Fitting Simplifies Curb Box Repairs

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**T**he Ernie Fitting is an inexpensive fitting used to repair curb boxes. It was originally developed by Ernie Scutella, a former distribution manager of the Erie Water Works (EWW) in the 1980s. The tool is produced by EWW Mechanic Joe Barto.

### SOLVING A COMMON PROBLEM

EWW distribution crews are often asked by property owners to repair curb boxes, the access point to water service shutoff valves. The lids are sometimes damaged by lawn mowers, snow plows, and snow throwers. When this occurs, the threads of the box or lid are typically damaged so badly that a new lid can't be screwed on. In other cases, the curb box may be too low and is already fully extended, thus making it difficult to further extend the curb box to grade for easy access.

The Ernie Fitting bolts onto the top of the damaged or fully extended curb box. The only preparation needed is a minor amount of hand shoveling around the top of the curb box to expose enough of it to bolt onto. The fitting allows a new curb box lid to be screwed onto the curb box or the curb box to be raised without replacing the entire box, saving significant excavation, backfilling, and restoration expenses.

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Cut 1.25-inch black iron pipe into a 3-inch section. Next, drill and tap two holes into 1.25-inch black iron pipe and insert two  $\frac{5}{16}$ - $\times$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch bolts. Finally, weld a 1- $\times$ -2-inch piece of nipple black steel to the top of a 1.25-inch black iron pipe.

It only takes about 25 minutes to produce an Ernie Fitting. Compare that time with replacing the entire curb box, which could take 2-4 hours, depending

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on the depth. Additionally, depending on the existing surface, the curb box could require expensive restoration.

Using the Ernie Fitting results in thousands of dollars in savings compared with a complete replacement.

### MATERIALS AND COST

1.25- $\times$ -10-inch black iron pipe.....	\$50/length yields 40 3-inch pieces (\$1.25/piece)
1 box of (100) $\frac{5}{16}$ - $\times$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch bolts.....	\$24/box, and each fitting takes two bolts (\$0.48/fitting)
1 1- $\times$ -2-inch nipple black steel.....	\$2.79/piece
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$5 each</b>