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Water main break in Venice causes sinkhole

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The latest in a string of water main blowouts in L.A. occurred this morning in Venice, causing a sinkhole on Lincoln Boulevard.

Since Sept. 1, there have been 34 "major blowouts" in L.A.'s water system in which streets have flooded and pavement has buckled.

Another one occurred Friday afternoon on Myra Avenue in Silver Lake. By contrast, the city had only 21 such ruptures in all of September 2008, 17 in September 2007 and 13 in September 2006.

The latest break occurred on Lincoln Boulevard near Palms Boulevard. KABC-TV footage showed a section of the roadway had buckled, creating a hole. Details of the break were not immediately available, but some lanes of Lincoln are closed.

City engineers trying to determine what's causing the water main bursts have been taking soil samples, sending pipe pieces to labs and performing a statistical analysis on each break.

But some experts said a prime suspect should be the city's recent decision to allow sprinkling only on Mondays and Thursdays.

They said that if more water flows through the system on those two days, then pressure suddenly changes on other days, it could put added stress on already-aging pipes.

-- Shelby Grad