



Beginning in late July through mid-September, you will see Fire District crews working at fire hydrants and notice water running down the street. Your first thought may be that we are ignoring our own philosophy of conserving water. We flush water lines through the use of fire hydrants, which is an important preventive maintenance activity. Although it may appear to waste water, the process is part of a routine maintenance program necessary to maintain the integrity of the fire protection water supply and assure adequate water is available for firefighting purposes.

As a result of the line flushing process, residents in the immediate vicinity of the work may experience temporary discoloration of their water. This discoloration consists primarily of harmless silt and air and does not affect the safety of the water. If you experience discoloration in your water after crews have been flushing in your neighborhood, clear the pipes in your home by running all water faucets for a few minutes.

Q: Why does the water system need to be routinely flushed?

A: The city's water distribution system is a complex network of pipes where sediment or deposits naturally accumulate over time, particularly in the lesser used parts of the system. If not removed, these materials may impair the proper function of fire hydrants.

Q. What should I do after the flushing?

A. If you should have a problem with discolored or rusty water, you can flush the rusty water out of your pipes by fully opening a faucet and running cold water only for a few moments until the water runs clear. You may have to open each of your faucets one by one to remove all of the rusty water from your system. After running the faucets, you may wish to remove and check all mesh strainers on your faucets to remove any debris that may be trapped. You may also wish to run water through showers, toilets and even run an empty washer cycle just to make sure you have cleaned any rusty water from your pipes.

If you detect a problem with rusty water, you should not wash your laundry until you have cleared the rusty water from your system. If your laundry does become discolored, you should wash it again immediately – **Do not dry it first!** Drying it will make the rust difficult or impossible to remove! Also, do not use chlorine bleach with rust-stained laundry, the chlorine reacts with the rust and makes the problem worse.

Q. Why does the water look funny after hydrant flushing?

A. When a hydrant is opened, there will always be temporary incidences of discolored water containing fine sediment particles. There is no health hazard associated with discolored water. Allow a few hours for discoloration to dissipate. To verify the water has settled, allow your cold water tap to run a few minutes. If the discoloration persists for more than twenty-four (24) hours, please contact the Fire District @ 970-339-3920.

Q. Is it OK to drink sediment-laden or discolored water during temporary disturbance events?

A. Please understand that rusty or discolored water is not an unusual side effect from a hydrant flushing program, and does not indicate any sort of problem with the water system. The rust results from a reaction between the chlorine in the water, and iron in the pipes. The chlorine keeps the water safe to drink, although we don't recommend drinking the rusty water.