

Hydrant Flushing Facts & Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the City perform hydrant flushing?

Hydrant flushing is the quick release of water from fire hydrants. It's a controlled procedure that is vital to the general maintenance of the City's water distribution system. It ensures adequate water flow is available to fire fighters, residents and businesses. It also helps maintain the City's water clarity and quality by clearing iron and mineral deposits from the water mains (distribution pipes).

What are the effects of hydrant flushing?

Hydrant flushing helps ensure water quality and helps avoid random bouts of rusty water if there is a high demand for water, such as a major firefighting effort or high usage during a sustained drought.

Sometimes hydrant flushing can make the water temporarily appear rust-colored because the iron and mineral deposits in the water get stirred up.

Why is my water rust/tea-colored from the hydrant flushing? Is the water safe?

Sometimes hydrant flushing can make the water temporarily appear rust-colored because the iron and mineral deposits in the water get stirred up. Water is safe to use and consume during hydrant flushing, however it may stain laundry.

The main component of the discoloration of the water during hydrant flushing is caused by iron deposits from inside the water mains. The source of the iron is naturally occurring from deposits in the ductile iron pipe that make up the underground water system.

How come my water is discolored, but my neighbor didn't notice any discoloration?

If you were home when the flushing was going on and you turned on your water, you're water may be discolored because you are drawing in the water as the City's system is flushing it and stirring up the minerals and iron.

If your neighbors were not home all day and returned home in the evening and turned on their tap when no flushing was occurring, they most likely will not notice any discoloration.

My water is discolored. What should I do?

Wait until flushing has subsided in your area then run the cold water tap until the water runs clear.

If you have a water softener and are experiencing discolored water, place the unit into regeneration or cleaning mode after hydrant flushing is completed in your area. Remember rust colored water is safe, but it may stain laundry. If this happens, keep clothes wet and treat them with stain remover.