

## **DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES - DIVISION OF WATER & SEWER ANNUAL WATER SYSTEM FLUSHING PROGRAM**

You may notice crews working at hydrants and see 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 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 water system allowing us to continue to deliver the highest quality water possible to our customers.

As a result of the line flushing process, residents in the immediate vicinity of the work may experience low water pressure and temporary discoloration of their water. This discoloration consists primarily of 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 your water faucets in your home a few minutes. We recommend using a laundry tub in the basement or outside hose bib.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

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

A: The water distribution system is a complex network of pipes and storage tanks where sediment and deposits may naturally accumulate over time. If not removed, these materials may cause water quality deterioration, taste and odor problems, or discoloration of the water. Water may also stagnate in lesser used parts of the distribution system. This can result in degraded water quality.

***Q: Is the Water Department the only ones that flush the lines?***

A: Generally, the Water Department or the Water Plant performs flushing activities to clear the lines and to take pressure tests for the Fire Department and insure that the hydrants function properly.

***Q: What should I do when I see crews flushing hydrants in my area?***

A: If you see crews flushing hydrants while driving, PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY. You may also want to delay any laundry washing until the crew is finished and you have checked your water for discoloration.

***Q: What should I do after the flushing?***

A: If the tap water is used during flushing, it could come out full of sediment and discoloration. If you encounter discolored water, shut the water off and wait several minutes. After waiting, check for clarity by running cold water for a few minutes allowing new water to work its way into your pipes. If not, wait a few more minutes and check again. We recommend using a basement laundry tub or outside hose bib to clear the line. In some cases, you may experience slight discoloration for a few hours. This discoloration only affects the appearance of the water; it does not affect the taste or water quality.

***Q: What should I do if my water pressure or volume seems low after flushing?***

A: Check your faucet and washer screens for trapped debris.

***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 our Water Department at 609-654-6791

***Q: Is it Okay to drink the sediment-laden or discolored water during temporary disturbance events?***

A: It is recommended that water users wait until the water has cleared before using it for potable (drinking) purposes.

***Q: What is the silt in the water system after flushing?***

A: Water contains minerals and these minerals react with the inside of the pipe to produce the by-product. This chemical reaction between the pipe and water is normal and natural process. This process can occur on the inside of the pipe and prevent adequate volume of water flow. The flushing process removes much of this by-product.