

# City of Falmouth 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 makes 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.

Although the water is discolored during hydrant flushing and may look unclear or tinted, the water is not harmful or contaminated.

### **I live on the west side and the City is flushing hydrants on the east side. How come my water is discolored?**

Sometimes residents who live beyond the limits of the area where hydrant flushing is being performed will notice rust-colored water. We assure you that the Water Division is making every attempt to keep these impacts to a minimum, while continuing to maintain safe drinking water.

### **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, your 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.

### **How often is hydrant flushing done?**

Hydrant flushing is performed two times a year—once in the spring and once in the fall.

### **Tips for Minimizing Water Discoloration during Hydrant Flushing Operations**

- If possible, limit your water use.
- Wait until flushing has subsided in your area then run the cold water tap until the water runs clear.
- If 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.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 859.654.3328 or City Hall at 859.654.6937.

Thank you and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.