Frequently Asked Questions: Hydrant Flushing

Why does the City flush hydrants?

It improves drinking water quality by removing sediments from inside the mainline and flushing them out through the hydrant. It also identifies malfunctions of the hydrant and related valves; helps determine weaknesses in the water distribution system; identifies inadequate water volumes and pressures in the main lines.

When does the City flush hydrants?

The City utility maintenance crews flush hydrants bi-annually throughout the city in the spring and in the fall.

Why is my water discolored?

You may notice a color change in your tap water following the flushing of the water main. The discoloration is normal and will last only a short time after the nearby hydrants have been flushed. When a hydrant is opened, the water in the mainline will flow out at a high velocity. This creates a scouring action in the pipe and dislodges fine sediment particles that have accumulated in the pipe. The discoloration is due to the suspended particles mixing with water that have not had time to settle. There is no health hazard associated with the discolored water.

What should I do if my water is discolored?

The discolored water is safe for drinking, but you may choose to reschedule laundry or other work that may be affected by discoloration. Turn on the tap water to clear the pipes in your home by running all water faucets for a few minutes.

Is the City wasting water when it flushes hydrants?

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. It is necessary to periodically flush water through the main lines in order to protect the quality of your drinking water. The volume of water that is released through a fire hydrant quickly flushes off sediment that accumulates on the bottom of the water mains and helps keep the water in the system fresh and clean. This is an important preventative maintenance activity.