

City Of Rochester's Semi-Annual Hydrant Flushing Program

The Department of Public Works flushes the fire hydrants throughout the City every spring and fall. The hydrant flushing program is very important to the maintenance of the City's water distribution system. The process normally takes from four to six weeks and occurs primarily at night. During this process, it is not uncommon for a yellow, brown or reddish tint to appear in the water. Harmless mineral deposits settle in the water mains, and flushing the system stirs the deposits causing the discoloration. Flushing removes the sediments from the mains and also serves the following purposes:

- ❖ Improves water quality in the distribution system
- ❖ Verifies the proper operation of fire hydrants and valves
- ❖ Helps find weaknesses in the water system
- ❖ Checks for closed valves and weak flows in the water mains
- ❖ Verifies adequate fire flows for fire fighting

Typically the City advertises the program two weeks prior to starting. You can check the following media outlets for notification of when flushing will occur:

- ❖ Fosters Daily *Democrat*
- ❖ Rochester *Times*
- ❖ The City of Rochester's webpage: www.rochesternh.net
- ❖ Channel 12
- ❖ Channel 26

What should I do when the City is flushing in my neighborhood?

If you see the Public Works crew flushing a hydrant on your street, avoid running tap water and using the washing machine or the dishwasher until the flushing is completed. Also, please drive carefully to avoid the crew, equipment, and hydrant discharge.

What Could I expect before and after flushing?

- ❖ If tap water is used during flushing, it could come out discolored and contain sediment.
- ❖ If you encounter discolored water, shut the water off and wait several minutes.
- ❖ After waiting, check the clarity by running cold water for a few minutes allowing new water to work its way into your pipes. If the water is clear it's acceptable to use. If not, wait a few more minutes and check again. In some cases, there may be slight discoloration for a few hours.
- ❖ The water may also have a milky appearance. This is due to tiny air bubbles which will dissipate out and is not harmful. Letting water in a glass sit for a moment will also take care of air bubbles that are stirred up during flushing and cause the milky appearance.
- ❖ Avoid washing laundry during scheduled flushing times. Wait until the water runs clear at the tap, then wash a load of dark clothes first. Hot water tanks can hold discolored water for some time after the cold water runs clear.
- ❖ It is a good opportunity when flushing is completed in your neighborhood to drain and flush your home water heater tank.
- ❖ If pressure or volume seems low, check your faucet screens for trapped particles. There may also be a temporary drop in water pressure while hydrants are running.
- ❖ You may notice a more pronounced chlorine taste or odor in the water during springtime flushing. This is because free chlorine has a more noticeable chlorine taste and odor. This will dissipate when water is left in an open container in the refrigerator.

For information about the hydrant flushing schedule contact Utility Supervisor at 332-4096. For questions on water quality, treatment or supply contact Water Treatment Chief Operator at 335-4291.

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we work together to maintain the quality of your drinking water.