Fire Hydrant Flushing – Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. Why is hydrant flushing necessary?
A. It enhances water quality by removing sediments from inside the mainline and flushing them out through the hydrant; identifies malfunctions of the hydrant and related valves; helps determine weaknesses in the water distribution system; identifies inadequate water volumes and pressures in the mainlines and helps determines fire flow adequacy.

Q. What should I do when City crews are flushing hydrants in my area?
- Mainly, avoid using the dishwasher, washing machine; don't turn on the faucets (hot or cold); wait until the operation is completed.
- If you are driving in the work zone, **please drive carefully**.

Q. Why does my water look rusty or cloudy after hydrant flushing?
A. 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 fine sediment mixes with the water, turning the water a cloudy or rusty brown color. This mixture is discharged out of the hydrant. There is no health hazard associated with the discolored water. Remember, after the hydrant flushing operation, let your water clear a few hours before you use it.

Q. Who do I call for more information?
A. For additional information about water quality, please call the Public Services, (952) 448-5353.

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 the 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. 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 rust colored 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 PublicServices.

Q. Is it OK to drink 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 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 a normal and natural process. This process can occur on the inside of the pipe and prevent an adequate volume of water flow. The flushing process removes much of this by-product.

Q. What will happen if fire hydrants are turned on or off too quickly?
A. This will cause "water hammer", which is a pressure surge or wave when water in motion is forced to stop or change direction suddenly. The pressure wave can cause major problems, from noise and vibrations to pipe collapse. In home plumbing, this is experienced as a loud bang resembling a hammering noise. Water Department and Fire Department Employees have received instruction on how to operate fire hydrant valves slowly to avoid water hammer.