

Fire Hydrant Flushing

Newburyport Department of Public Services – Water Division maintains 935 fire hydrants throughout the city. Newburyport Water Department flushes the city’s fire hydrants two times per year (spring and fall). It may appear that we are ignoring water conservation philosophy. **However, the process of flushing hydrants is an important preventative maintenance activity to insure the integrity of the water system and deliver the highest quality water to our customers.** Over time, various materials such as corrosion products and organic materials, build up in the mains of all water distribution systems. This buildup can cause water quality issues such as unusual tastes and odors and discoloration of the water. Hydrant flushing programs are established to flush the buildup out of the mains. Traditionally, hydrants are opened one at a time in a general area, which increases the velocity of water in the mains. The increased velocity picks up sediment that has settled in the bottom of the main and lightly scours the walls of the pipe to remove residue, which is then carried out the open hydrant(s). The hydrants are left open until the water runs clear.

Hydrant Flushing serves the following purposes:

- Enhances water quality by flushing out sediments from the mainline pipes
- Verifies the proper operation of fire hydrants and valves
- Helps to determine weaknesses in the water system
- Helps to identify closed valves and weak flows in the water main
- Verifies ample water flow for fire fighting

NOTIFICATION: One week prior to flushing, Newburyport Water division will publish Alerts in the Newburyport Daily Newspaper. An alert will be posted on the Newburyport Department of Public Services Water Department web page to let residents know what general area of flushing will take place that day. In addition, signs will be posted at several key areas in the city.

CLOUDY WATER: As a result of hydrant flushing, residents in the immediate vicinity may experience temporary discoloration of their water. If tap water is used during flushing, it may be discolored by fine sediment particles dislodged from the main line. If you see discolored water, shut off the tap and wait several minutes. Then 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 still unclear, repeat this process a few times, remembering to run the water for several minutes each time. In some cases, there may be slight discoloration for a few hours. Hot water tanks can hold discolored water for some time after the cold water runs clear. If water does not clear, please contact Newburyport Water Business office at 978-465-4420. The discoloration affects only the appearance of the water; it does not affect water quality. There is no health hazards associated with discolored water.

NOTE: It is **IMPORTANT** you do not wash laundry while the water is cloudy or discolored. Please wait until water is clear before laundering. Newburyport Water and Sewer office does not accept responsibility for articles reported as soiled or damaged when washed in cloudy or discolored water.

WATER PRESSURE: As a result of hydrant flushing, your water pressure may be low. The issue will be rectified when the flushing is complete.

DRINKING YOUR WATER AFTER FLUSHING: Although your water may not be visually appealing for this temporary period of time, it is **SAFE TO DRINK!!** This discolored water due to flushing meets all federal and state drinking water standards. There is no health hazard associated with the discolored water!