



## Uni-Directional Flushing Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the field crew doing and why?**

The City is implementing a common utility maintenance procedure called flushing. It involves opening specifically-selected fire hydrants under controlled conditions to scour the inner surface of water distribution pipes. The scouring process helps to remove corrosion scale and sediment that accumulate naturally over time. If otherwise left in place, these deposits could degrade water quality and restrict pipeline carrying capacity.

### **I lost water service. Why, and what do I do?**

Though not intentional, this happens from time-to-time during the flushing program. During flushing, certain valves are closed to provide control over the direction of flow. It is likely that a valve closure resulted in loss of supply to your block. The field crew will be sent to your block immediately to investigate and identify which valves may be closed and need to be re-opened.

### **Will I be paying for the water used in flushing?**

No, each residence and business is individually metered at the service connection to determine consumption. Your utility bill is based on your specific meter readings.

### **Why does flush water (hydrant or at-the-tap) appear discolored?**

The color is due to the presence of solids that are scoured from the surface of the pipes. These may include sand, sediment, iron (rust), and manganese, all of which are naturally-occurring and common to virtually every water system. At the levels that cause mild discoloration, these solids are not harmful, although they may impart an undesirable taste to the water.

### **How do I get rid of the discolored appearance?**

Customers are advised to fully open their cold water faucets in their kitchen and bathroom to flush this water out of their service piping and plumbing lines. In most cases, the water should begin to run clear again within a minute. If it does not clear, please let us know and we will have a field crew sent to your house to investigate further.

### **Is the water safe to drink?**

Yes, the City has maintained compliance with all state and federal drinking water quality standards. The City performs frequent monitoring at its well sources and throughout the system to ensure the safety and aesthetic quality of your water. Each year, the City prepares the Water Quality Report for all our customers. This report summarizes the results of testing and provides a comparison to regulatory standards. We are performing

flushing as a proactive measure to further enhance water quality and help ensure continued compliance.

**Is this counterproductive to conservation?**

The City strongly values, encourages and practices water conservation measures. In developing the flushing program, the City has considered the impact of water use and weighed it against the known benefits of flushing. While a fair amount of water is used and is necessary to create an effective scour, the City uses a flushing practice called unidirectional flushing that is specifically designed to reduce overall water usage. Also, in a given neighborhood, flushing is conducted relatively infrequently – generally once every few years – so over the long run the amount of water used is relatively small.

**Does discharged water affect the environment?**

No. The City takes special precautions to ensure that the quantity and quality of the water flushed is safe for disposal. Before doing any field work, the City investigates water disposal routes and ensures that they are of adequate capacity to receive the water and are not sensitive to the flow. In most cases, the water is sent to either the sewer system, stormwater collection system, or to a drainage ditch. During flushing, the field crew monitors disposal of the water, reduces its energy to prevent erosion, and adds vitamin C to remove any chlorine.

**Who do I call with questions?**

Any questions or concerns you may have can be directed to Steve Craig, Utility Operations Manager, at (360) 754-4150.

