

Town Flushing Hydrants

Each year the Town of Oak Island Public Utilities Department will flush the distribution system during the months that Brunswick County is required to change its treatment process. This usually occurs within the months of June – July for our system. The Town of Oak Island Fire Department is required to test and flow all the hydrants annually and to document all needed repairs and provide them to the Utilities Department so that we can make the corrections and get the hydrant back into service. The process of periodically flushing the hydrants is an important preventive maintenance activity.

Flushing, although it may appear to waste water, provides the Town the means to clean and refresh the entire water distribution system. By discharging a large volume of water through a fire hydrant, water flow within the pipeline is increased. This increased flow actually scours the water system. The procedures are necessary to maintain the integrity of the water system.

During the flushing process it is not uncommon for a yellow, brown or reddish tint to appear in the water. Harmless mineral deposits settle in the mains and flushing the fire hydrants stirs the deposits sometimes causing discoloration of the water.

The main impact of hydrant flushing is discolored water. Here's what you should do if hydrant flushing is taking place in your area:

- If possible avoid using water while the hydrant flushing is taking place. By not using water from the tap (cold or hot) or running appliances that use water (dishwashers and washing machines), you can prevent discolored water from entering your household plumbing system altogether.
- If you encounter discolored water following hydrant flushing, run the cold water taps only. Do not use hot water taps throughout your home at bathroom sinks, tubs, kitchen faucets etc. for 5 to 15 minutes or until water clears. This allows discolored water to work its way out of your household plumbing system. By not using hot water taps, this should prevent discolored water from entering your hot water system. If you do experience discolored water on your hot side, flush in the same manner as the cold system.
- Don't do laundry while or shortly after flushing is taking place. The discolored water can sometimes stain fabrics. Wait until water runs clear at your taps before using your washing machine, and wash a load of dark colors first.
- If laundry appears to be stained, keep articles wet. Do Not Dry. Rewash load using a stain/rust remover (such as a product called "Rust Out"). Do Not Use Bleach on stained laundry as bleach will "set" the stain.
- If, after flushing your water pressure or volume seems low, clean faucet screens to remove silt and mineral sediment that could be obstructing water flow.

For more information, or if you experience water quality problems lasting more than four hours following hydrant flushing, please contact Town of Oak Island Public Utilities Department @ (910) 201-8007.