



## What causes discolored water?

Some common causes of discolored water are the results of a disturbance or change in the flow of water. Naturally occurring minerals are common in cast iron water mains and over time a very fine layer of iron and sediment can develop on the bottom of the pipe. When stirred up or disturbed from the normal flow, your water becomes discolored. Common causes are water main breaks, fire flow from hydrants for fire protection, street sweeping needs, illegal and unauthorized fire hydrant use, summer irrigation and high demands of summer time usage. If you experience discolored water on the cold water side only this may be the reason. \*Hot water discoloration is most commonly associated with a failing water heater or sediment buildup inside of the water heater tank. \*

## Is the water safe to drink?

Some people may be more vulnerable to drinking water, in general and should seek further advice from their health care provider. While the water is not harmful, it's unappealing to look at, it shouldn't be consumed until it has cleared up.

## What should I do if my water is temporarily discolored?

Usually the cold water will clear up on its own and over time. The length of time to clear up is dependent on the cause of the event. It could be a few hours or a couple days if something significant has occurred. Avoid using hot water which is most commonly stored in a separate appliance. That will protect your water heater from drawing in the discolored into the tank and leaving sediment at the bottom. Try to limit consumption when you first notice it then wait an hour or two. After that, run the faucet in the tub for a few minutes because that uses the largest volume of water in most homes. Then run one faucet clear at a time until the house has cleared up. The water is fine to flush toilets when needed. If your water is still discolored after a few hours, please call 203-574-8251 to report it.

## Can I do laundry when the water is discolored?

Discolored water can sometimes stain clothing especially light colors. Its best to wait until the water clears up before using the dishwasher. If you were doing laundry when the water became discolored, it's best to stop the machine. Wait until the water clears up. If you drain the water and continue to the spin dry cycle it's more likely you will stain the clothing. "When in doubt, wait it out". The water will become clear and then resume the wash cycle at that point.

If your laundry becomes stained, look for products at Walmart, CVS, and other local stores that remove iron or rust and are safe on clothing.

## Does discolored water mean there is a problem with my plumbing?

Discolored water from the cold water side can mean your water service pipe is a problem. Older water service pipes from the street to the water meter can be galvanized or iron pipe. Over time they become clogged with natural mineral buildup and when water is open and then closed, particles become dislodged awaiting the next open flow. This may mean it's time to update and replace the older service pipe with new copper pipe. If you are experiencing this condition, you should contact a licensed plumber.

## Water Department Recommendations for Discolored Water

As a best practice for water distribution systems, the Water Department flushes all of its fire hydrants on a yearly basis. This improves water quality, removes sediment from the pipes after the lower flows of winter and maintains the pipes for long lasting quality. This typically is done in early spring or as weather conditions allow.

Please make sure the discoloration is on the cold water side only. Emergency requests for the WWD to respond require a fee.

Done yearly through its capital improvement plan, the WWD cleans and relines portions of its water pipes. This involves the cleaning of the interior of the pipe by scraping it then spraying a thin layer of cement to coat, protect and create a smooth surface.

