



Water Distribution System Flushing Operations Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a flushing operation?

Water main flushing is a routine operation that results in a clean and maintained water system. During this activity, water is forced through pipes at high velocity and systematically flushed out of the fire hydrants, removing accumulated mineral sediment until the water is clear. Crews identify and flush the mains within 14 water pressure zones. Flushing within the individual zones can take a few minutes to several hours.

2. Why is this maintenance important?

As part of the City's core mission to provide our community with a reliable, safe drinking water supply, a flushing program is used to improve water quality, restore water pressure and protect pipe integrity. Part of the program also involves testing the large main-line valves and fire hydrants to ensure they are operating properly. Ventura Water maintains approximately 380 miles of distribution pipelines, 3,700 fire hydrants and 16,000 valves.

3. When will the flushing maintenance be conducted?

To minimize impacts to water service, this maintenance is generally scheduled for overnight hours (10 pm – through 7 am). To be most effective, the flushing operation will be conducted in an established pattern following the distribution system. Schedules may be tentative as higher priority activities may cause delays and additional days may be necessary within certain zones.

4. What will happen in my neighborhood?

During flushing operation, residents may hear water discharging with force from the hydrants and see water flowing in the streets. Road travelers are asked to take extra care during this time. To safeguard the environment, Ventura Water treats the water prior to discharge to the stormdrain system.

5. What will happen in my home or business?

When crews are flushing the water system close to your residence or business, you may experience temporary periods of low pressure. Flushing operations may also lead to brown or discolored water, which can be drawn into homes and businesses if the water is being used during or immediately following the flushing. This is a temporary condition and should only affect customers for a few hours at most. The discoloration is caused by iron (red color) and manganese (black color) particles being dislodged from the water main, which can stain porcelain and laundry. If discoloration occurs, open the cold tap nearest the water main – usually the front outside faucet – to full flow and run the water



into your garden or lawn for a few minutes until it is clear. If the water does not clear the first time, wait a few minutes and run the water again. It is also advised that you make sure your water is clear before doing laundry or other projects for which discolored water could cause problems. Also, it is important to not run hot water if you notice it is discolored, as the discolored water can be drawn into the hot water tank.

6. Is the water safe to drink?

Yes. The temporary discoloration is caused by minerals and other fine particles, such as iron and manganese, which are not harmful to your health.

7. What is the schedule and how can I be notified?

The tentative schedule and updated information are available on Ventura Water's website at <http://www.cityofventura.net/water/maintenance>. To also alert customers, crews will place "Water Flushing" signs in key roadway intersections the day before the maintenance is to occur for hydrant flushing. Since valve exercising generally results in minimal impacts for a small area, crews will place signs in the area as the maintenance is being performed.

8. Does flushing waste water?

To clean the pipes effectively, water must be discharged from the fire hydrants with sufficient velocity and volume. The flow is stopped as soon as the water is clear so that only the amount needed is released into the street. Safety, regulatory, and logistical considerations prevent us from capturing this water for reuse.

9. How often is flushing conducted?

Distribution system dead-ends (end of certain water lines that do not circulate) are flushed twice a year and a full-system maintenance operation is scheduled as needed.

10. How can I learn more about Ventura's water quality?

Ventura Water annually publishes a Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report to educate and inform customers. Visit <http://www.cityofventura.net/water/drinking> to view the latest report and other water related information.