

Oakland County Drain Commissioner Well Water Supply System Flushing Frequently Asked Questions

The Operations and Maintenance Division performs water system flushing each spring and fall for well water supply systems that we operate and maintain. Flushing consists of opening fire hydrants at the ends of roads and courts. Flushing only a portion of a water system can affect the whole system. Here is a sample of some frequently asked questions about our water system flushing procedures.

Why do you flush the water system?

We flush the system to remove settled particles such as iron from the system. This helps to reduce discolored water in the system.

How often do you flush the water system?

We flush untreated well water systems twice per year; each spring and fall.

Is there any particular time you flush the system?

Yes. We flush from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Based on our customers' comments, night flushing reduces inconvenience. It also decreases traffic interference and utilizes the lower flow demand period.

How do I know when my area will be flushed?

Postcards are mailed to each service address stating the date(s) that we will be flushing the water supply system that services your home. Water system flushing dates, along with corresponding larger subdivisions noted, are listed under the calendar portion on our website at; www.oakgov.com/drain/calendar/water_flushing.html. Of course it's possible that these subdivision date(s) may change if we run into any unanticipated problems during the flush. But we strive to stick with our published schedule.

My notice indicates more than one night of flushing, should I refrain from using the water from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. for each date listed?

That's our recommendation. Large water systems often take several nights to flush. You may experience discolored water on any of the dates listed, but particularly when we are in your neighborhood. If the system is stirred up when you use water in your home, you could draw the discoloration into your internal plumbing causing discoloration at your faucets, etc. Our recommendations are; try not to use the water at all on the night we are flushing in your neighborhood and limit activities that cause the greatest discoloration concern such as doing laundry on all dates that the system is flushed.

Can I drink the water during the system flush?

Yes. The discoloration of the water is caused by iron particles and it not a health concern. Understandably, you may not want to drink discolored water even though it's not a health risk.

That's why we recommend that you store some water prior to the system flush for drinking and cooking purposes. It's also okay to use water for showering, etc. Just remember that any water use while the system is stirred up may bring the discoloration into your home plumbing.

I did my laundry during the system flush and now it is stained, what do I do?

We do not recommend doing laundry when the water is discolored. If the clothes in your washer are stained, do not dry them. Rewash the load when the water is clear. Some customers have used iron removal products in their wash to remove staining. Iron stain removal products can be found in the detergent aisle at most grocery stores.

Should I take any special precautions with my water softener?

Yes. We suggest you bypass your softener during the period your system is being flushed. When the flush is complete, open an outside faucet closest to the point of entry to your home or start your sprinkler system to help clear any discolored water you may have. Then, put the water softener back on-line and manually start the regeneration cycle.

Do I need to check/run my outside faucet each day of the flush?

It doesn't hurt to check the outside faucet in the morning. If the water is discolored after running the faucet for several minutes, limit indoor water use.

The flush is complete; my cold water is clear but my hot water is discolored, what do I do?

Drain and refill the hot water tank. Please USE CAUTION to prevent burning!

What should I do if my water is still discolored after the system flush is complete and I've done everything you recommend?

Contact our water maintenance unit at 248-356-6299 to schedule a low pressure flush. A low pressure flush consists of removing the meter in your home, attaching a hose to release the water outside while opening and closing valves to flush particles from your service line – the piping from the water main to your home. There is no charge for this service, but an adult must be home when we arrive because we need access to the meter. Low pressure flushes are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. We are in your area on certain days of the week, so the number low pressure flushes we can complete in one day is limited.

Who do I contact if I have any additional questions?

Give us a call. Contact our water maintenance unit at 248-356-6299 or Connie Sims at 248-858-1441 for any additional questions or concerns.