



City of Seattle
Seattle Public Utilities

April 8, 2016

Water Main Flushing Starts in West Seattle to Reduce Discolored Water

Dear West Seattle Neighbor:

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) will begin flushing water mains in West Seattle starting the week of April 18, 2016. The map on the back of this page shows the area in purple that will be flushed first (from April through June). Eventually more water mains throughout West Seattle neighborhoods will be flushed, which will take several months to complete.

SPU is performing this major water main flush to help maintain water quality and reduce the uptick in discolored water that some West Seattle customers have been experiencing since last summer. Flushing won't eliminate discolored water, but it will help decrease it.

What do customers need to do? Residents and businesses do not need to take any action to prepare for this work. Customers will be able to use their water as usual. When crews are flushing nearby, customers may notice a slight reduction in their water pressure. They may also see temporary discolored water, which should clear quickly once crews are done flushing the water main. Running the cold water for a few minutes can also help clear the discoloration.

Why does discolored water occur? Discolored water can happen when crews operate a fire hydrant, when there is a water main break or leak, or when the water in the pipes is forced to travel in a different direction than normal. When one of these events happens, naturally occurring sediment in the water and rust in the pipes get stirred up, causing the water to look discolored.

Flushing the water mains will remove some of the sediment and rust that has been resting in the pipes. This will help reduce the level of discoloration and the time it takes for the water to clear when there's a disturbance in the pipes.

Is the water safe? Yes. Every single day, SPU takes samples throughout the system of the drinking water that it provides to 1.4 million people. The water is tested for contaminants and is regulated by the Washington State Department of Health. Seattle's water remains safe to drink.

Questions or concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about the flushing process or discolored water, please read through the "Frequently Asked Questions" sheet that is enclosed with this mailing. If you experience any problems with your water, contact SPU's 24-hour emergency line at 206-386-1800.

We thank you for your patience and understanding while SPU strives to continue to provide some of our nation's best drinking water.

Seattle Public Utilities provides essential services — pure mountain drinking water, recycling and composting that lead the nation, and sewer and drainage systems to protect our local waterways — that safeguard your health and our shared environment, and help keep Seattle the best place to live.