

Borough of Brielle Water Department

HYDRANT FLUSHING & WATERLINE MAINTENANCE

The flushing process removes naturally occurring minerals and sediment that build up in water mains over the course of the year and allows us to collect key data about the system. By opening each fire hydrant in our water distribution system, we ensure each one is properly maintained and available for use in the event of a fire.

When you see water running down the street as crews work on fire hydrants, it may appear to waste water. Actually, this important preventative maintenance activity maintains the integrity of the water system and allows us to continue to deliver the highest quality water possible to our customers.

The Brielle Water Department performs hydrant flushing semi-annually, (Spring and Fall). Spot maintenance and hydrant repairs by the Brielle Water Department crews are sometimes needed in certain areas of our system to maintain water quality. As a result of the line flushing process, residents in the immediate vicinity of the work may experience temporary discoloration of their water.

This discoloration consists primarily of harmless silt and air and does not affect the safety or quality of the water. If you experience discoloration in your water after crews have been flushing in your neighborhood, run all water faucets in your home for a few minutes to clear the pipes.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HYDRANT FLUSHING

Q: Why does the water system need to be routinely flushed?

A: Brielle's water distribution system is a complex network of pipes and storage facilities where sediment or deposits may naturally accumulate over time. Without regular flushing, these materials may cause water quality deterioration, taste and odor problems, or discoloration of the water. Water may also stagnate in lesser used parts of the distribution system. This can result in degraded water quality.

Q. When does flushing normally occur?

A. Flushing is performed by the Brielle Water Department in the Spring and the Fall. This work is typically done during the overnight hours to minimize impact on our residents.

Q. How will this affect my water?

A. During the flushing process, residents may experience some disturbance in their usual water service such as a short-term decrease in water pressure or discolored water. Although the water does not pose a health risk, it is recommended to avoid drinking the water until it runs clear from the tap.

Do not wash clothes if the water is discolored.

It is okay to use the water for showering, bathing, and toilet flushing.

Q. What should I do after the flushing?

A. If you use tap water during or immediately after flushing, it could come out with sediment or be discolored. If it's discolored, shut the water off and wait approximately ten minutes. After ten minutes, open several cold water faucets in your home allowing new water to work its way into your pipes. Leave the faucets running for several minutes until the discoloration is gone and the water runs clear. In some infrequent cases, customers may experience slight discoloration for a few hours. This discoloration only affects the appearance of the water; it does not affect the taste or water quality. Lastly, avoid washing laundry until the water is clear from the tap. Wash a load of dark clothes first.

Q. How long does it take to flush a hydrant?

A. Hydrant flushing takes about 15 minutes.

Q. What should I do if my water pressure or volume seems low after flushing?

A. Check your faucet and washer screens for trapped debris.

Q. Why does the water look funny after hydrant flushing?

A. When a hydrant is opened, there will always be temporary incidences of discolored water containing fine sediment particles making the water appear brown or rust-colored. Fine air bubbles may also mix in with the water giving it a milky appearance. While discolored water does not pose a health risk, you should allow a few hours for discoloration to dissipate. To verify the water has settled, let your cold water tap run a few minutes. If the discoloration persists for more than six (6) hours, please contact the Brielle Water Department at (732) 449-6463.

Q. Is it OK to drink sediment-laden or discolored water during temporary disturbance events?

A. We recommend water users wait until the water has cleared before using it for potable purposes (cooking/drinking) or for washing clothes.

Q. What is the sediment in the water system and how does it get there?

A. Water naturally contains minerals which react with the inside of the pipe to produce the sediment by-product. This chemical reaction between the pipe and water is a normal and natural process. Sediment can also build up inside of the pipe and prevent an adequate volume of water flow. The flushing process removes much of this by-product.

Q. What takes place during hydrant flushing?

A. The Water Department uses a unidirectional flushing program whereby water is flushed from larger mains first, before moving to smaller water mains. System valves are opened and closed during the operation to control the direction of the water flow. Because Brielle's water mains are designed to handle fire flow (which is much greater than domestic or commercial water flow), the velocity of flow in most mains is fairly low. Due to this, solids may settle on the bottom of the pipes. The problem may be more significant where there are dead-end pipes or areas of low water use.

Over time, these deposits reduce the "carrying capacity" of the pipe. They can also be a source of color, odor, and taste problems in the water if the deposits are stirred up by increases in the flow. Flushing the pipes at high velocities will normally remove most of the settled substances and discolored or stale water.

During flushing, a Water Department crew opens each hydrant to its maximum flow. This high flow stirs up iron deposits and other settled materials and pushes them out of the system. Any issues with the hydrant are noted and it is placed on a schedule for repair.

