

## Fire Hydrant Flushing



The City of Lake Worth Fire Hydrant Flushing Program is a vital component of the Utility Department's ongoing commitment to provide its customers with the safest and highest quality water possible.

Four times a year, the City of Lake Worth Water Utility Department performs a city wide fire hydrant flushing program of the system. This involves utility workers opening fire hydrants throughout the city, ensuring the water quality standards are met at every service area. In addition to this scheduled flushing, the City of Lake Worth also performs localized hydrant flushing throughout the rest of the year in order to maintain the required chlorine residuals. This localized maintenance flushing is performed in response to daily water quality sampling results.

The Flushing Program's main objectives are:

1. Eliminate potential public health problems such as microbiological and chemical contaminants in the water.
2. Eliminate problems such as taste, color, or odor in the water.
3. Maintain the structural condition of the pipe, and system pressure.
4. Exercise hydrants as part of proper system maintenance.
5. Maintain customer satisfaction by addressing water quality and pressure problems.

The principals implemented in this program are the same that you should use in your home. It's a good idea to run all of your faucets for approximately three to five minutes when they have not been in use for a week or longer, such as when you return from vacation. Also, proper maintenance of your water heater includes draining and flushing all of the water at least once per year. This will increase energy efficiency and improve water quality.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### a. What is the Fire Hydrant Flushing Program?

This program is a preventive maintenance program used to improve water quality in the City. The procedure involves the systematic opening and closing of hydrants along one section of main at a time, to force the water through the pipes at high velocity. This removes accumulated mineral sediments from the mains. The operation can take from a few minutes to over an hour per pipe section, although most last about 15 minutes.

**b. How often are hydrants flushed?**

The Water Distribution Department flushes fire hydrants four times per year.

**c. What time of day does flushing occur?**

Most crews work between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**d. What should I do when there is flushing in my area?**

If you see a crew flushing a hydrant on your street, avoid running tap water and using the washing machine or the dish washer until the flushing is complete. If doing laundry after flushing activities end, begin with a load of dark clothes first.

If water pressure or volume seems low, check your faucet screens for trapped particles.

The City would also like to suggest that residents flush their water heaters at this same time to remove sediment build-up in the bottom of their water heaters. This will extend the life of your water heater and the heater will run more efficiently helping to conserve energy. Follow the directions provided by your water heater manufacturer.

**e. How will flushing affect water service?**

When flushing crews are working close to your residence or business, you may experience periods of very low pressure. We attempt to notify customers in advance if flushing is expected to result in a water shortage, but such shortages are rare.

**f. Is the water safe to drink?**

Yes. If the water would be unsafe for any reason to drink, a boil alert would be issued.

**g. Why is my water cloudy, or have a rusty color?**

As a result of the flushing procedure, residents in the immediate vicinity of the work area may experience temporary discoloration of their water. This discoloration consists primarily of harmless silt and precipitates and does not affect the safety of the water. If you experience discoloration in your water after crews have been flushing in your neighborhood, clear the pipes in your own home by running all water faucets for three to five minutes. Allow a few hours for discoloration to completely dissipate.

**h. Who can I call for more information?**

If you would like further information about this topic, please feel free to contact the Water Treatment Plant at (561)586-1710.