

Why does the Fire Department perform hydrant flushing?

Hydrant flushing is the quick release of water from fire hydrants. It's a controlled procedure that is vital to the general maintenance of the water distribution system. It ensures adequate water flow is available to firefighters, residents, and businesses. It also improves water quality by clearing iron and other mineral deposits from the water mains. It also lets us know if the hydrants are working properly and how much water they will provide during a fire.

What are the effects of hydrant testing?

Hydrant flushing helps ensure water quality and helps avoid random bouts of rusty water if there is a high demand for water, caused by a major firefighting effort or water main break. During the testing of a hydrant, some customers may notice reduced water pressure and flow.

Why is my water rust/tea-colored from the hydrant testing? Is the water safe?

Sometimes hydrant flushing can make the water temporarily appear rust-colored because the iron and other mineral deposits in the water mains get stirred up. There is no health hazard associated with discolored water. Water is safe to use and consume during hydrant flushing, however, it may stain laundry.

Does the Fire Department test the water regularly? Is the testing done at various sites?

The Greenburgh Water Department tests the water both leaving the water plant and throughout the water system regularly, following U.S. and IL Environmental Protection Agency protocols. Many tests are also completed around the clock during the water treatment process.

I live in an area remote from where the hydrant testing is occurring. How come my water is discolored?

Sometimes residents who live beyond the limits of the area where hydrant flushing is currently being performed may notice rust-colored water. This can occur because the opening of a hydrant can cause water to run in the opposite direction than normal. Water Department personnel use techniques intended to minimize these impacts.

How come my water is discolored, but my neighbor didn't notice my discoloration?

If the water inside a home or business is turned on while hydrant flushing is going on, discolored water may enter your plumbing. If a neighbor does not use water during the day, they most likely will not notice any discoloration.

My water is discolored. What should I do?

Wait until flushing has subsided in your area then run a cold water tap until the water runs clear. Remember rust-colored water is safe, but it may stain laundry. If this happens, keep clothes wet and treat them with stain remover. If you notice the water flushing crew is near your property, refrain from using water, and delay washing clothes as much as possible.

How often is hydrant flushing done?

Hydrant flushing is performed in the fall. The work is generally done between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.