



City of  
**South  
Gate®**



# Water Quality

## **What should I do if my water looks discolored?**

Water discoloration is caused by water velocity changes within the piping network. High flow disruptions like sheared fire hydrants, fire flow tests, or flushing are examples of how velocity can be increased which scours the internal lining of pipes breaking away natural deposits. If discoloration occurs, immediately call the Public Works Water Division to notify and report the issue. The Division will respond and check water quality at the Distribution system. Once the City confirms that mainlines are clear you may need to open the cold water tap to full flow until the water runs clear. Most situations will take 5 minutes to clear the plumbing system.

## **Why is there sediment or dirty water in the water mains?**

Over 58 percent of the pipeline network consists of unlined cast iron pipe which is susceptible to corrosion, scaling, and accelerated deterioration. Over a period of time, naturally occurring mineral particulates attach to the pipe walls during low or non-flowing periods. The minerals deposit in sections of the pipe as a scale buildup which will get stirred up by flushing, pressure fluctuations, or opening and closing valves. These particulates consist mostly of iron and manganese. Iron sediment results from corrosion of iron pipes and valves used in the distribution system. Other iron sediments result from the change of dissolved iron, which occurs naturally in our water, into scale build up. This precipitation of minerals occurs in the presence of chlorine and oxygen under certain low flow conditions. Dissolved manganese also occurs naturally in our water and it can be precipitated into scale as with iron.

## **Is it safe to drink the discolored water?**

Although iron and manganese do not pose health concerns, they can degrade the aesthetics of the water by affecting the taste, clarity, and color of the water. Therefore, sediments need to be removed periodically through flushing. While the discolored water has been treated and distributed to acceptable and healthy standards, it is recommended that water users wait until the water has cleared before using it for potable purposes.

## **How do I report the discoloration of the water?**

Please contact the Public Works Department at (323) 563-5790, Monday – Thursday 6:30 am to 5:00 pm or (323) 563-5436 after hours.

## Tips:

- Make sure your water is clear before doing laundry or other projects for which discolored water could cause staining.
- Avoid using hot water to prevent sediment accumulation in your hot water tank.