

# Water System Flushing FAQ



During a flushing operation in your neighborhood, you'll see crews flushing via fire hydrants and end of water main blow off pipes.

## Why does Western "flush" the water mains?

Flushing the water mains improves water quality by removing sediment that slowly builds up at the bottom of the water main over time. The sediment comes from internal corrosion of the water mains over many years.

## How does unidirectional flushing (UDF) work?

During the UDF process water is forced through the water mains at a high speed and discharged through hydrants. The fast moving water scours and cleans the mains. We leave the hydrants open until the water runs clear.

## How will I know when Western is cleaning the water mains in my neighborhood?

Western will inform residents before starting the flushing program by posting notices on our website.

## What should I do if my water is discolored after Western has flushed the water mains?

Water is sometimes discolored after water main cleaning, but this should not last long. In the event customers draw discolored water into the home, flush a cold tap only a few minutes, up to 15 minutes maximum. As a precaution, prior to using hot water run the cold water tap for a few minutes to ensure discolored water is not drawn into the hot water tank.

## What should I do if the water is still discolored after three to four hours?

Contact Western's Supervisor Albert Magallon at 951.789.5119 or if after 4:30 p.m. at 951.789.5109.

## How long does it take to clean the water mains on each street?

It takes about 30 minutes to 60 minutes to flush the water mains on each street.

## Why can't Western clean the water mains at night?

It's safer for staff to work on the streets in daylight. Also, daylight provides better visibility to see when all the sediment has been flushed out and the water is running clear.



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## Is water main cleaning a waste of water?

No, this is a normal and necessary part of maintaining a safe and reliable drinking water supply. If water is discharged into the environment, it will soak back into the groundwater basins for reuse.

## Are there other benefits to using the UDF technique?

Yes, in addition to removing more sediment and using less water than conventional flushing, UDF tests and exercises the water system valves and hydrants.

## Do other cities have similar water main cleaning programs?

Many cities have some type of flushing program to clean their water mains (e.g. conventional flushing or UDF). UDF is considered the best way to improve water quality and increase the reliability of the water distribution system.

## How will I be affected?

Flushing will generally occur between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. for most neighborhoods. Specific hydrants will be used to discharge water. There may be a slight drop in pressure or noticeable discoloration of the water from the minerals and sediments that are being flushed out. Water service should not be disrupted during the flushing process.

## What about water pressure and safety?

Flushing may cause short-term pressure fluctuations along with sediments in the water reaching your home or business, try to not use water during this time. Your water remains safe, meeting if not exceeding all water quality standards.



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It takes about 30 minutes to 60 minutes to flush the water mains on each street.

## To clear your water:

- Western advises customers to flush a cold tap for a few minutes, for up to 15 minutes maximum. Do not choose a tap that has a water filter connected to it, or the sediment may clog your filter. Do not use a hot water tap because it could draw sediment into your hot water tank.
- Catch some water in a light colored cup or container, if it is clear, you can use your water.
- If the water coming from the tap doesn't clear in five minutes, wait 30 minutes and try again.

## Chlorine smell:

- Western adds only enough chlorine in the treatment process to keep the water safe for consumption. Customers can easily get rid of the chlorine taste and smell by filling an open container with water and keeping it in the fridge for drinking – much of the chlorine will leave the water overnight.

If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Albert Magallon at 951.789.5119 Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or for after hours at 951.789.5109.

For more information, contact Western at 951.571.7100 or visit [wmwd.com](http://wmwd.com)

