



City of Santa Barbara Public Works Department Water Resources Division

What to Do If You Experience Discolored Water

The City of Santa Barbara has recently received inquiries from customers about discolored drinking water from their water taps. You may be wondering, “Why are we having discolored water issues?” and “Is the water safe to drink?”

Rest assured, the water does not pose a health concern and can be used, though drinking is not recommended. Suspension of sediment in water pipes and mixing of groundwater supplies in the distribution system are the major causes for the discolored water.

If you are experiencing discolored water issues, please take the following steps:

1. *Contact the Public Works Dispatch at (805) 564-5413 to report the issue.*
2. *If possible, do not use your clothes washer. If washer is already in use, re-wash your load after your water is clear.*
3. *To flush your faucets, run your COLD water for 10 to 15 seconds at each faucet, turn the water off for a few minutes, and repeat the process until the water runs clear.*
4. *If you continue to have discolored water, please call us back at (805) 564-5413.*

In effort to reduce these occurrences, the City continues to perform water main flushing. To help minimize the waste of water associated with traditional flushing (discharging water onto the street from fire hydrants), the City periodically implements a flushing technique which includes filtering and recirculating water back into the distribution system. This process significantly reduces water loss and ensures water quality. In the event of an emergency, the City may utilize traditional methods of flushing to address an immediate issue.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the *Public Works Dispatch* at (805) 564-5413. *Please note the dispatch line is staffed during business hours, from 7AM to 3PM, Monday to Thursday, and every other Friday. After hours, please call (805) 963-4286.*