

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Watermain/Unidirectional Flushing

What is 'unidirectional flushing'?

Unidirectional flushing is a maintenance procedure used to scour, clean, and improve the carrying capacity of our water distribution system. This procedure helps us continue to provide our high-quality drinking water to our customers.

The water distribution system is set up in a grid-like pattern which allows water to be fed from several directions at the same time. When performing unidirectional flushing, Utility staff open and close pre-determined valves in order to isolate a specific section of water main.

Since the water main is isolated and is only being fed from one direction (hence the term 'unidirectional'), the speed of the water flowing through the isolated section of main is greatly increased, producing a scouring effect.

The scouring effect removes any potential sediment build-up and cleans the water main.

How will I know when unidirectional flushing will be taking place in my neighborhood?

We mail notification postcards to all customers during flushing weeks. We also put this information on our website and put up posters around town in high visibility locations. We also hand out notices to specific customers that may be impacted by the flushing process like schools and hotels.

I am a water-sensitive customer, how can I make sure my service is uninterrupted?

We realize that some of our customers are water-sensitive for a variety of reasons (businesses, medical concerns, etc). Although we strive to provide continuous service to our customers, there may be brief durations of low water pressure for customers adjacent to where we are performing the unidirectional flushing. If you have concerns about maintaining continuous water service, please contact our office at 715/359-6177. We cannot guarantee uninterrupted service but we can coordinate with you directly to keep any interruptions to a minimum.

What Should I expect when unidirectional flushing is happening in my neighborhood?

Unidirectional flushing will have a minimal impact to the majority our customers. Customers in the immediate vicinity of where flushing is taking place may experience a temporary drop in water pressure and discoloration of the water until the mineral deposits have been flushed out of the watermain. If this does occur, please be aware that Utility staff is diligently working to minimize any inconvenience caused to you by our flushing process.

Flushing typically occurs Monday through Friday between 8:00am and 3:00pm.

How long does it take to flush each water main?

Our experience has ranged from 20 minutes to an hour or possibly longer and is dependent on a variety of factors. Factors include the age of the water main, the type of pipe, the length/diameter of the water main being flushed, and if any sediment buildup is present.

The time is ultimately determined by the turbidity (clarity) of the water being flushed.

Can I use my water when flushing is taking place?

Yes, you can use the water while we are flushing on your street. Please be aware, however, that our flushing process may stir up rust particles and sediment that may have accumulated over time in the water main. If you use water while we are flushing you may notice discolored water.

You may also experience low water pressure while we are flushing. Your pressure will return to normal once our flushing has ended.

Does unidirectional flushing waste water?

Unidirectional flushing does not waste water. Our water source is groundwater. The water used during the flushing process soaks back into the ground and back into the water aquifer where after being filtered by the soil, can be used again.

How will the water being used be paid for?

Funds from the Utility rates pay for this program, just like any other maintenance program we have. Water rates will not be increased to pay for unidirectional flushing.

Each residence and business is individually metered to determine each customer's individual usage. Your Utility bill is based on your specific meter readings.