

WATER QUALITY FACT SHEET

Discolored Water

Cloudy Water

Cloudy or milky water may be caused by harmless, tiny air bubbles in the water. Let the water sit for 5-10 minutes; the bubbles will gradually rise to the top, and the water will clear up on its own. These tiny bubbles are more common in winter because air is more soluble in colder water. If your water does not clear up on its own, or white particles settle to the bottom, please call customer service at 910-457-9700 ext. 1000.

Mineral Discoloration

As is common in water systems across the country, mineral sediment and even rust in pipes can be disturbed by water main breaks, pressure or velocity changes, construction activity, fire hydrant use or other events which may result in discolored water at your tap. The discoloration from mineral deposits caused by naturally occurring minerals like iron and manganese can range from the appearance of light beer to iced tea or, in extreme cases, black coffee.

Discoloration from rust resulting from legacy galvanized pipes usually appears as burnt orange or red. When these sediments in the distribution pipes are disturbed, water discoloration may reach your faucets.

Discoloration from both pipe corrosion and mineral deposits has the ability to stain laundry, especially light-colored fabrics. Avoid washing laundry if you notice discolored water. If you notice orange, red or brown staining after laundering clothes you may have success removing stains with a 1:1 mixture of white vinegar and clean water or commercial stain removers designed to remove rust or minerals.

What to do if you notice discolored water at your tap

Run your cold faucet (not hot) close to where the water line enters your home. The water should run clear within 5-10 minutes. If it does not clear, call Customer Service at 910-457-9700 ext. 1000. Village Utilities crews will respond to the affected area and flush the hydrants to let the discolored water flow out of the system. Please note that flushing can, and will, disturb mineral deposits and cause short-term discoloration.

It is important to not run your hot water to clear discolored water so that the minerals aren't drawn into your hot water heater. Minerals drawn into your hot water heater can cause the discoloration to last longer.

Even if you don't pay your water bill directly, it's important to alert Village Utilities to discolored water events if running cold water for 5-10 minutes does not resolve the issue.

Should I use water that is noticeably discolored?

Minerals such as iron and manganese are important to human health. However, since discolored water is not aesthetically pleasing and the mineral content is visible, avoid using noticeably discolored water for drinking or cooking. It can also cause laundry stains, especially in light-colored fabrics. Wait for water to run clear before such uses.