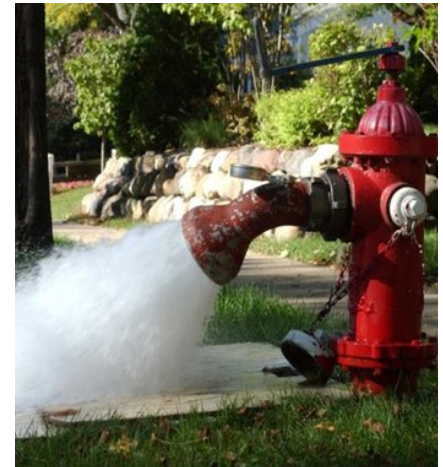


CITY OF OCALA: Hydrant Maintenance and Line Flushing



The Importance of Flushing Water Lines

Residents who notice the City of Ocala's Water Resources Department crews working at fire hydrants and see water running into the street may think that the City is not practicing its own advice about conserving water. Periodically "flushing" fire hydrants is a necessary preventive maintenance activity. This process is part of a required maintenance program to maintain the integrity of the water system and to continue to deliver the highest quality water possible to our customers. Flushing activity is used for two general purposes: water quality and hydrant maintenance.



Water Quality

Flushing the water system on a regular basis removes sediment from lines and keeps the entire distribution system refreshed. The Water Resources Department Lines Maintenance Division maintains more than 565 miles of water lines throughout its service area, which includes most of the City of Ocala and parts of Unincorporated Marion County. Flushing activity for water quality purposes is minimized through the City's ongoing practice of using hydrants on a rotating basis to fill City water trucks. These trucks are used for: street cleaning, utility maintenance, dust suppression activities, and other activities needed by various departments throughout the City.

Hydrant Maintenance

Every fire hydrant is flushed annually for preventative maintenance to ensure proper operation and available flow. Annual hydrant testing involves opening the hydrant enough to ensure there are no restrictions in the hydrant or piping, so that it is useable by the Fire Department crews if needed. The entire flushing usually lasts only minutes. Hydrants also are tested when first installed, and for insurance and design purposes.

When maintenance is performed residents in the immediate vicinity of the work may experience temporary discoloration of their water. This discoloration primarily consists of harmless silt and precipitates and does not affect the safety of the water. If you experience discoloration in your water after crews have been flushing in your neighborhood, clear the pipes in your own home by running all water faucets, for a minute or two, starting with faucets outside first.

This same philosophy of water line preventive maintenance is one that is recommended for use in your own home. Your home's water heater should be drained and flushed at least once a year to keep it working efficiently and to maintain water quality inside your home. It is a good practice if your house is vacant for a week or more, upon return run all your faucets for at least a minute before using the water. This ensures that you do not use any stagnant water that may have developed in your home's pipes while you were away.

**Questions about water line flushing? Please contact:
Water Resources Lines Maintenance at 352-351-6775**

