

Most Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is causing the water in Fort Dodge to be brown?

The color of the water is caused by iron that has precipitated out of the water, settled at the bottom of the pipes, and with abrupt changes in direction and velocity has become suspended in the water.

2. What is the city doing to fix this problem?

At the present time, the city is taking calls and sending crews out into areas to flush particulates out. There is a city wide flushing program, which will begin the first week in May. This process will flush water mains starting near the water plant, and continue outward through the rest of the system. The flushing program itself may cause some discolored water.

3. Is the water safe to drink?

Yes, the city checks the bacterial quality throughout the entire system every month as per DNR and EPA regulations. There has not been any detection of bacterial contamination due to the discolored water.

4. How long will it take before this problem is finally resolved?

The process of flushing all of the water mains will take until October. As sections of the city are flushed, residents in or near that area may experience discolored water.

5. If my water is discolored, what should I do?

If you see that your water is discolored, stop using it, and call the Public Works Department at 574-4307, or the Utility Billing Department at 573-7156, and alert them to the situation. You will need to wait about hour, and then run some water using a cold-water faucet to see if the discoloration has cleared. If you are experiencing discolored water on a weekend or holiday, please contact the Law Enforcement Center Dispatch at: 573-2323, and they will be in contact with Public Works officials.

6. Why do the water rates in Fort Dodge continue to increase when the quality of the water is decreasing?

The water quality is not decreasing – it is increasing. Rates have been increasing in recent years to allow for treatment plant upgrades, replacement of small water mains, and the addition of new wells to our source water capacity. The water discoloration some residents have experienced is due to extra iron sediment in the water lines, caused by not flushing the lines often enough. The city wide flushing program this summer will resolve the discoloration.

7. What is causing the water to often times a) smell like sewer b) have a strong chlorine smell?

a) It can be difficult to determine the origin of smells in the water. A sewer smell (which most often smells of rotten eggs) can sometimes be attributed to the initial flow of water into a drain, which can break the surface tension of the water in the trap, releasing gas generated by grease and matter breaking down in the trap. Many times this smell can also be caused by the anode in the water heater breaking down and releasing sulfides.

b) Strong chlorine odor in our water does not indicate that there is an excessive amount. The amount that is in the water system is within DNR standards.

8. Once hydrants are flushed, how long should it take before we can expect clear water?

After you call about the discoloration, wait an hour before using any water. Then run a cold-water tap for 4 minutes. If water is clear, you may resume normal usage. If the water is still discolored, call the City again and wait another hour.

9. If we have brown water on weekends or holidays, who should be contacted?

If you are experiencing discolored water on a weekend or holiday, please contact the Law Enforcement Center Dispatch at: 573-2323, and they will be in contact with Public Works officials.