



## **Frequently Asked Questions About Discolored Water**

### **Introduction**

As an essential part of our system's maintenance program, Sativa County Water District (SLACWD) opens hydrants in an effort to clear our water mains of sediment and mineral build up. The District maintains and receives all of its water from two active wells at two plant locations. Over time, minerals from our deep well water can accumulate inside water pipes. Four times a year, District crews open fire hydrants and blow-off valves to flow large amounts of water in a planned route. The water travels so fast that it is strong enough to remove the build-up of minerals from inside the pipes. We refer to this activity as "flushing".

### **Is my water safe to drink?**

Yes. The water distributed in SATIVA's system meets all State and Federal drinking water standards.

### **Is the water I receive from SATIVA contaminated?**

The water is safe and meets all State and Federal drinking water standards is not contaminated. While not aesthetically pleasing, the discolored water is safe.

### **What causes Discolored Water?**

The water discoloration is caused by sediment build up inside pipelines due to a very old pipeline system constructed with cast iron main and steel pipelines. The District maintains and receives its water from two active wells, distributed through an eight-mile pipeline network. As an essential part of our system's maintenance program, SLACWD opens hydrants to clear our water mains of sediment build up due to old pipelines. This is a State-wide maintenance practice known as flushing and is used by many water agencies to manage sediments and presence of discolored water due to an aging infrastructure.

### **Is discolored water dangerous?**

The water does not pose a health threat even though it is not very appealing to drink. This discoloration consists primarily of harmless sediment that does not affect the safety of the water.

The cause of the recent water discoloration reports experienced by our customers was due to sediment build up due to the lack of high velocity flushing in a very old pipeline system. This new aggressive Deep Main Water Flushing Program will result in clear water improvement as SLACWD and the residents have already noticed clear water throughout the system. We recommend that water users wait until the water has cleared before using it for potable purposes.

### **Why is the water discolored in my property?**

The water discoloration is caused by sediment build up inside pipelines due to a very old pipeline system constructed with cast iron main and steel pipelines. The discolored water is removed by system flushing. After flushing, residential water heaters may contain water that needs to be flushed to fully remove discolored water from residential properties.

### **Why are you flushing our water pipes?**

Flushing the water pipes removes the discolored water from the system. District crews open fire hydrants and blow-off valves to flow high velocity water in a planned route. The water travels so fast that it is strong enough to remove the build-up of sediment and discolored water from inside the pipes.

Under new management operations since January 2018, SLACWD has initiated an aggressive, Systemwide Improvement Program (SIP) to deliver safe and reliable water that meets and exceeds drinking water standards for health and safety set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of California.

Our goal is to improve water quality and deliver water that is clear, tastes better and maintains good supply and pressure. Since water moves slowly through the underground water distribution system, and over time and years of deferred maintenance, our distribution lines have accumulated sediment that causes water discoloration, change in taste, odor, or even reduced pressure. The SIP is a program to improve our aging water pipes that are over 70 years old.

### **What should I expect as Sativa County Water flushes our water pipes?**

Flushing may cause a temporary drop in the water pressure to your home or business. Temporary discolored water may appear while flushing. The discolored water is safe, and these conditions will subside in a few hours after flushing is completed, and after residents properly drain their water heaters and flush their faucets.

### **What should I do during the flushing program of our water pipes?**

Residents will be notified of flushing activity in their area through door hangers placed by SLACWD crews as they move from area to area. During the time of flushing, we advise residents to:

- Avoid using the dishwasher.

- Avoid doing laundry.
- Don't turn on the faucets (hot or cold).
- If you are driving in the work zone, please drive carefully.

After the hydrant flushing is complete, you may need to flush your water inside your house, outside your house, and in your water heaters until it runs clear.

### **What have been the results of the water flushing program?**

The water flushing program results in clear water in the distribution system. However, the residents must drain their water heaters and flush their faucets to achieve clear water results. The results have shown clear water after the recent deep water main flushing.

### **Has an oversight agency inspected our water and flushing program?**

Yes. On Thursday, April 19, 2018, after reports from customers, the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) visited our facilities to review our water flushing program, inspected our distribution facility, and took random residential water quality tests in our service area. The SWRCB approved of our water flushing program and we are waiting for a final report of their visit.

### **What should I do if I have discolored water?**

We recommend that you drain your water heater following the examples on our website. We also recommend that you flush your faucets for several minutes after flushing your water heater. If the problem persists, please contact our hotline at 310-631-3818 for additional assistance.

### **Can water heaters cause brown water?**

Failing hot water heaters in properties can be a source of discolored water. If the discoloration comes only when you run the hot water in your property, check the condition of your hot water heater and drain it properly. Your home's water heater should be drained and flushed on a regular basis, according to manufacturers' recommendations, to keep it working effectively and efficiently.

### **Should I use Red-B-Gone to remove stains?**

No. We no longer recommended using this or any other product.

### **Does SATIVA's water contain lead?**

We provide clean, high-quality water to our customers. The water coming from our wells **does not** contain lead.

### **Does SATIVA test the water?**

SLACWD has highly effective water treatment and quality assurance processes in place to ensure the absence of harmful substances in tap water. Water quality is monitored by licensed operators following local, state and federal guidelines. Providing safe, reliable water to our customers is our highest priority at SLACWD. Water samples will continue to be taken at numerous locations throughout our service area. To date, all test results show that the water is in compliance with more than 200 regulated and unregulated contaminants and current findings confirm that, despite our water's occasional discoloration, our drinking water continues to meet all standards for safe drinking water.

### **Where can I get more information?**

For more information, please visit our website at [www.sativawd.com](http://www.sativawd.com), or feel free to contact our Customer Service Department at [customercare@sativawd.com](mailto:customercare@sativawd.com) or (310) 631-8176.

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