

## Public Works Department Water Division Frequently Asked Questions

### **My water bill was higher than expected. Why?**

Common reasons for higher water usage include: Obvious or Hidden leaks in your home or irrigation system, an increase in activities such as laundry, or plant watering, or a broken pipe, or valve.

If you have a question about your water bill, please call (805) 933-4211. Listen to the message and select option 2.

### **I just requested and paid for a new water service work order. When will this be completed?**

Work orders requesting a new water service that does not involve a contractor shall be completed by a City work crew within two weeks from the date the work.

### **I have a leak or a lot of water coming up from the service line.**

If you suspect a leak at the meter, you can call (805) 933-4211 ext. 0 and request to have a customer service representative (CSR) check to verify where the leak is located. If the leak is on the City side of the meter, the City will assume responsibility for repairs.

If the leak is on the customers' side of the meter, on private property, the CSR will advise you to call a plumber from the yellow pages

### **My water pressure has dropped.**

If the problem is isolated to inside the house, it may be due to a water softener malfunction, or the home's main valve is not fully opened. If it is the water softener, use the bypass valve to verify that this may be the problem. Zeolite (particles that look like orange fish eggs or fine sand) may have been released and is clogging the faucets, aerators and showerheads.

To check the house valve, turn the valve counter clockwise to verify it is in the full open position (a clockwise turn will close it.)

### **I have a water leak at my hot water heater, irrigation system or under my sink.**

This could be caused by a malfunctioning pressure regulator, which may need to be replaced. The normal setting for a regulator should be set between 60 and 65 psi. The City's water system operates at a range of 40 to 120 psi.

### **My water has been shut off without proper city notice.**

When an area is scheduled to have the water shut off due to a major repair of the City's water system, the City or the Contractor will post notices. Sometimes, however, due to an unforeseen emergency, the City will shut off water without notice. Please call (805) 933-4211 ext. 0 with any questions.

### **The water coming out of my tap looks rusty or reddish/brown, or milky. Is it safe?**

If the water is rusty or reddish brown, it is due to hard water deposits such as calcium, magnesium, iron and manganese. There are several potential reasons for this: A fire hydrant

may be in use; a hydrant was struck or knocked down, causing a rapid release of water; City staff opened a hydrant to flush out the water system.

The water may be rusty or reddish brown due to the deterioration of galvanized pipes that are starting to deteriorate, or an aging water heater.

To fix this condition, run the tap inside the house until the water runs clear. The rusty water can be used to water your plants or garden.

If the water is milky, it is due to air in the line. Fill a clear glass with tap water and let it set for several minutes. The air will gradually dissipate and the water should run clear.

This condition could be caused by home plumbing work, or a City water pump has been serviced. Letting the tap run for a few minutes should fix this problem  
If either of these problems continue, please call (805) 933-4211

**My water smells like rotten eggs or sulfur**

This will occur over time due to soap and debris built up in the sink drain tap. Pour household bleach into the drain and leave for 30 minutes to an hour and flush with running water for 3 minutes.

**I have an emergency due to a water leak;**

**I have no water;**

**I am unable to shut my water off.**

During the day, please call (805) 933-4211 to contact Water Maintenance personnel. If you have an after-hours emergency, please call (805) 421-4116.

**I'm designing a new structure and would like to know the exact static flow and pressure information for the worksite location.**

Please call 933-4211 ext. 0 to make arrangements for a Fire Flow Test. A request and payment of the \$70 fee must be made before the hydrant can be tested.

For \$50, the firm or individual requesting the flow test may hire a private company to perform the test with a City employee that will witness it.

**I am planning to landscape my front yard, is it possible to change the areas around the hydrant and meter box?**

A person may not place any object, material, debris, or structure of any kind that shall prevent free access at all times upon or near a fire hydrant or water meter box within three (3) feet.

**I need to have the water shut off so I can make repairs.**

Please call 944-4211 ext. 0 to schedule all shutdowns. The Water Division will work with customers to schedule shutdowns.