



MIDDLESEX
WATER COMPANY

FLUSHING FACT SHEET

Waste Not. Want Not. Why Hydrant Flushing Keeps You Safe and “Wasting” is sometimes Necessary!

We’ve seen it many times. Water flowing out of a hydrant and you wonder “what a waste of good clean water.” Is that money going down the drain? Flushing hydrants can be frustrating to borough residents but it is an essential preventative maintenance procedure for ensuring clean and safe drinking water.

While it may appear that water teeming out of a hydrant and into storm sewers is not doing anyone any good, that assumption couldn’t be farther from reality. In fact, the very act of flushing maintains the integrity of the water distribution system and piping network, removes sediment and rust from the water, widens the pathway for water to flow and helps to maintain proper chlorine concentrations throughout the water system.

Hydrant flushing is a critical step in hydrant operations and in ensuring water quality. Flushing helps utilities identify if hydrants are in working order and ensures proper operating conditions for fire fighters.

It’s common knowledge that chlorine is a common disinfection procedure in water treatment plants. The addition of chlorine helps to ensure that bacteria do not thrive in the water distribution piping network. Because chlorine naturally degrades the longer it is in water, hydrants are flushed periodically to keep water moving, prevent it from stagnating and to maintain proper levels for proper chlorination. Flushing keeps byproducts of the disinfection process such as Total Trihalomethanes in check and within compliance during times of elevated organics in source water.

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To summarize, if you see a fire hydrant flowing, rest assured this procedure is controlled and deliberate. The actual water being lost down the drain is only a fraction of water flowing through the entire distribution network.

Frequently Asked Questions About Hydrant Flushing

WHY IS MWC FLUSHING WATER MAINS?

Although it may appear to waste water, “flushing” the water from the hydrants is an important part of a routine maintenance program necessary to maintain the integrity of the water system and ensure high quality water is delivered to our customers.

Water lines are flushed for three main reasons:

1. TO MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY

Flushing helps ensure proper chlorination and helps keep water moving throughout the distribution system.

2. TO CLEAN WATER MAINS

Over time, small particles can build up inside the water distribution pipes and can have an impact on water quality. Water professionals flush hydrants to pull water at high velocity through pipes to a discharge point. The rapid flow serves to scour the insides of the pipes, dislodging harmless iron and mineral deposits.

3. TO CONDUCT FIRE FLOW TESTS

Fire hydrants are tested periodically to ensure and document proper functioning so they are ready for an emergency.

