

Rusty Water

Why is the water brown?

Your water is brown due to tiny rust particles made of iron. Under normal conditions, these particles lie undisturbed on the bottom of the pipes. When a disturbance occurs such as a water pipe break, it causes the water in the pipes to flow much faster than normal, which in turn, causes rust particles to be picked up off the bottom of the pipe and carried into the water. This can happen due to a broken water main, water main work/construction, a fire in the neighborhood, or anything that causes the water in the pipes to move faster.

Your local water department should know what is happening at that particular time, and how long the condition should last. If possible, you should refrain from using water -- for laundry, dishes, cooking and drinking -- until the condition clears up.

Is the discolored water that I am experience in my home/office safe to drink?

Even though discolored water is not harmful, we realize it's not aesthetically pleasing either. Whether or not you feel comfortable drinking the water is a personal decision and an understandable one. If at anytime Harwich Water Department's water is deemed unsafe to drink, you will be notified by Harwich Water Department immediately via several different forms of media.

Although harmless, discolored water may leave stains when washing clothes. If you are experiencing discolored water, you may want to postpone doing laundry for a short time until your water becomes clear.

As with all of your, and your family's home and health decisions, common sense is always the best approach. Even though discolored water is harmless, if you don't feel comfortable using it during short periods of discoloration, we certainly understand. As always, you are the best judge of what is best for you and your family.

How long will it take to clear up?

This is hard to tell, every situation is different. Normally, the water will clear up in four to eight hours. You can help by flushing your commode every half hour or so until it runs clear. Please try not to use your hot water until the water clears, this will keep sediment out of your water heater.

What should I do if I notice discolored water at my tap?

The first thing you should do is to allow your COLD tap to run a few minutes to see if it clears up. This will help you determine if the discolored water is coming from the distribution system or your home's plumbing system. If this doesn't correct the problem within an hour, please contact the following numbers:

*Monday – Friday between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. please contact the Harwich Water Department at 508-432-0304.

*After Hours and holidays, please contact the Harwich Police Department at 508-430-7541.