



water is life[®] DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

PRESSURE INCREASE AND WATER QUALITY IMPACTS



Will an increase in water pressure impact my water quality?

A pressure increase changes the flow of water in pipes and may temporarily affect your water quality, including:

- Discolored water from disturbing old water mains and household pipes.
- Potential lead release from lead sources, including lead service pipes, solder, brass faucets, valves or fittings, and galvanized iron pipes.

What should I do if I experience discolored water?

Changes in water pressure can cause rust and sediment to break off from aging water mains and pipes and release metals in water. Iron in water is not a health risk, but often causes discolored water.

If you experience discolored water:

- Flush your inside plumbing until water clears. Open the cold water faucets one at a time, working from the lowest level (preferably the basement if you have one) to the highest level in your house. Do not open a hot water faucet until the system is completely flushed.
- After flushing, remove and clean all faucet aerators. The aerator is located at the tip of the faucet. Rust and sediment can build up in the screen.
- Do not use hot water until water clears. If you experience discolored water from your hot water tap for several hours, flush your water heater.
- Do not do laundry. If discoloration occurs during laundry, do not dry clothes. Rewash clothes to avoid stains.
- Consider replacing old household plumbing, particularly galvanized pipes.

If you continue to experience discolored water after flushing your cold water taps, contact our Drinking Water Division at **(202) 612-3440** or 24-hour our Emergency Hotline at **(202) 612-3400**.

What is galvanized plumbing?

Galvanized pipes are made of iron and are a dull, silver-gray color. Over many years, the iron corrodes, making the inside of the pipe brittle. These pipes can leak under the increased

pressure. The corroded iron inside the pipe can easily break off and release iron and other metals in water, causing discolored water or low pressure. This type of plumbing material was installed in many homes built before the 1960s.

What is a service pipe?

This pipe connects the water main in the street to your household plumbing. The material of water service pipes can vary. Some households have, or once had, a lead service pipe. Contact our Customer Service at **(202) 354-3600** to learn more about your service pipe material. You can also view your service pipe material information online at geo.dcwater.com/Lead.

Is there a potential for lead release in my water after the pressure increase?

If you have a lead service pipe or household lead sources, the change in pressure may increase lead release in water. Lead levels can potentially remain elevated until pipes adjust to the change in water pressure. Galvanized pipes are also a potential source of lead in households that have, or once had, a lead service pipe.

How long may lead levels remain elevated in my drinking water?

If you have a lead service pipe, lead levels may be elevated until your pipe adjusts to the change in water pressure, which could be a few months.

How can I minimize lead exposure after the pressure increase?

- DC Water will provide a water filter and six-month supply of replacement cartridges to homes that have, or once had, a lead service pipe.
- You should filter your tap water for drinking and cooking, including water used for making infant formula, ice, and beverages. If you are interested in additional replacement cartridges, check local stores or contact the manufacturer.
- **Important Reminder:** Children are most affected by lead. If you are pregnant, nursing, or have children under age six, make sure you and your children filter the cold water for drinking and cooking until all sources of lead in drinking water are removed.

continued

- Following the pressure increase, flush all household faucets by opening each cold water faucet one at a time. To flush each faucet, remove the aerator and turn on the cold water for approximately ten minutes. The aerator is located at the tip of the faucet and has a screen that can collect particles and sediment. Clean the aerator screen and screw the aerator back on the faucet. Do not open a hot water faucet until the system is completely flushed.
- Remove and clean kitchen faucet aerator (weekly for the first month, then every 3 months).

Do not use hot tap water for drinking and cooking. Always use cold tap water, including water used for making ice, beverages and infant formula. Hot water dissolves contaminants and may contain metals, sediment and bacteria that build up in the water heater.

- Test your water for lead. DC Water offers free lead testing to help residents identify potential lead sources. To request a free lead test kit, contact Customer Service at **(202) 354-3600** or email leadtest@dcwater.com.

MINIMIZING WATER QUALITY IMPACTS AFTER PRESSURE INCREASE

IF YOU HAVE ...	POTENTIAL WATER QUALITY IMPACTS	WHAT TO DO
Galvanized Plumbing	Discolored Water <i>Brown, Red, Yellow, or Orange</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron in water is not a health risk, but can cause discolored water. • Flush cold water taps for 15 minutes or until water clears. • Do not use hot water until water clears. If you experience discolored water from your hot water tap for several hours, flush your water heater. • Do not do laundry. If discoloration occurs during laundry, do not dry clothes. Rewash clothes to avoid stains. • Use a sediment filter to remove iron in water. Sediment filters can be installed where the water service enters your home or on individual faucets. • Replace galvanized pipes.
	Reduced Water Pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean faucet aerators located at the tip of faucets. • Drain your water heater. • Replace galvanized pipes. They have corroded over time and can leak or clog.
Lead Pipe or Galvanized Plumbing and once had a Lead Service Pipe	Lead in Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to lead is a public health risk, especially for pregnant or nursing women and children under age six. • Filter tap water: Select a filter certified to meet NSF Standard 53 for lead removal. Pregnant or nursing women and children under age six should use filtered tap water for drinking and cooking until all sources of lead in drinking water have been removed. This includes using filtered water for preparing infant formula, beverages, and ice. • REMINDER: Remove and clean faucet aerators every 3 months. • Replace lead service pipe. To help determine if you have, or previously had, a lead service pipe and for information about DC Water's Voluntary Lead Service Pipe Replacement Program, contact Customer Service at (202) 354-3600. You can also view your service pipe material information online at geo.dewater.com/Lead. Even after a lead service pipe is replaced, galvanized plumbing can continue to be a household lead source. • Replace household galvanized plumbing. If pipe replacement is not an immediate option, use a water filter until these pipes are removed.