

# WATER QUALITY



**Got a question?  
Check out our FAQ'S**

**WATER AND SEWERAGE CORPORATION**

*"Committed to Growth, Committed to Quality"*

**The Corporation's primary objective is to provide safe potable water. Red or brown water is a fairly common occurrence in city water supplies.**



### **Why is my Water Rusty or Discolored?**

Rust is often found in water because of unlined iron pipes in the city supply or in the home. Iron pipes rust (oxidize) over time when they come into contact with water and oxygen. Rust normally remains on/in these pipes, but it can get stirred up by events that cause turbulent changes in water pressure or by the introduction of desalinated water to areas that previously were supplied by poor quality groundwater.

The Corporation may adjust water pressures at different times of day, to respond to fluctuating demands, or for construction work. Water pipes may also require flushing in areas that have discolored water in order to remove sediment, but this may also cause a sudden temporary change in pressures, and a temporary increase in rust.

Sometimes events may occur that cause rusty or discolored water for a short period in areas that normally have clear water; however some communities experience some level of discoloration or rust more frequently or for prolonged periods, because their water is being supplied through older iron pipes which WSC is replacing on a systematic basis.

### **Your Water Heater**



Household water supplies inevitably contain mineral deposits. A water heater is a holding tank, and when hot water is not being used, deposits in the water will settle and accumulate at the bottom of the tank. Proper maintenance will prolong the life of your water heater, improve its heating efficiency and prevent costly repairs. Tanks should be drained and flushed periodically, according to the manufacturer's recommendations, or more frequently if water is hard or has a lot of deposits.

### **What does the Corporation do about Rusty Water?**

The Corporation replaces over 15 miles of pipe each year, and eventually all metal pipes will be replaced. In the interim, the most effective solution is to flush water pipes in affected areas to remove sediment. A free filter system may also be installed on your property, just after the water meter, to trap rust particles and other sediments that may be present.

Filters are then changed as often as is necessary to alleviate discoloration, but you should be aware that filters may not trap all rust, and they can become clogged quite quickly, allowing discolored water to pass into the premises.



### **Is it Safe to Drink or Use Rusty Water in My Home?**

Your city water supply has been treated to meet World Health Organization standards. Red or rusty water is not a pleasing sight, but it is safe to use. A slightly red or brown color makes water look dirty but it won't harm the body because iron is actually an important nutrient; however excessive rust is very unattractive, stains surfaces and clothing, and may cause water to taste bad. Using this water often requires allowing it to settle prior to typical domestic applications.



### **Your Washing Machine**

The inside of your washer may become coated with detergent and fabric softener residue, oils and grit from dirty clothing, and minerals from your water supply. This build-up can discolor and even damage your washer over time.

Regular cleanings to remove the residue will keep the barrel of your washer looking and functioning well, and will even improve the freshness of your clothes after washing!

Consult your product manual for specific recommendations or precautions. Wiping the barrel with a soft damp cloth, then adding a little bleach or vinegar or lime juice (not combined!) to a load of hot water and washing for a full cycle will often remove buildup and discoloration.



### **Your Swimming Pool**

Consult your pool specialist before filling or topping up your swimming pool. Additional filtration, water softeners or other additives may be required.

## Here are some tips for dealing with rusty water events at your premises:

- Run several cold water faucets or a garden hose for up to 20 minutes.
- Drain and flush your water heater periodically to remove sediments.
- Avoid doing laundry during an event. Stop washing immediately if a load becomes soiled by rust.
- If you live in an area where rusty water frequently occurs, you should take precautions when washing light or white clothing.
- If clothes become stained by rust, don't put them through a dryer or iron them, and do not use chlorine bleach. Heat and bleach will worsen the problem.
- Rewash clothes in clear water (a Laundromat or another home might be a good idea). Use a commercial rust remover in severe cases – but follow the Instructions carefully. You can get a free

bottle of rust remover by contacting the Corporation.

- Limit water usage during pipe flushing activities in your area.
- Rust stains on fixtures and faucets are more easily removed when they are fresh, using a natural or commercial cleanser. Don't use bleach which tends to set the stains.
- Contact our Call Centre if rusty water persists.
- The Corporation will evaluate claims for damaged clothing on a case by case basis. Contact our Call Centre for further information. Preserve damaged clothing for inspection.

## WE MAKE PAYMENT CONVENIENT AND EASY.

SUNCARD, VISA AND MASTERCARD PAYMENTS ACCEPTED.

WATER BILLS CAN BE PAID AT ANY BRANCH OF :

- BANK OF THE BAHAMAS
- CASH AND GO
- COMMONWEALTH BANK
- FIDELITY BANK
- FIRST CARIBBEAN BANK
- ◆ ROYAL BANK OF CANADA
- ◆ SCOTIABANK



**ONLINE PAYMENT ALSO AVAILABLE**

## WATER AND SEWERAGE CORPORATION

### CONNECT WITH US

PAY BY PHONE - 242-302-5630

CONTACT CENTRE - 302-5599

EMERGENCY HELPLINE - 242-325-0505

FAMILY ISLANDS TOLL FREE - 242-300-0150

help@wsc.com.bs www.wsc.com.bs