



Recently, there have been some concerns expressed on social media regarding brown water into households from the Town's domestic water mains in the downtown area. Brown water out of residents' faucets generally occurs when there are changes in the alkalinity, temperature, and mineral composition in the Town's water source that can cause the manganese that is coating the downtown water mains to go into suspension. Historically, this manganese build-up was caused by the decades old state requirement that the Town add potassium permanganate to the raw water as a sequestering agent for volatile organic compounds. The only way to remove the manganese from the domestic distribution lines now is to either flush the hydrants throughout the year, which will take years, or to replace the water mains, which is cost-prohibitive. The state of Colorado does not deem manganese in treated domestic water as harmful, and therefore does not regulate the element in mandated water testing, as it does other elements and compounds.

When run-off begins, the river water becomes murky and the Town switches to well water at the Town's water plant to avoid clogging the Town's microfiltration units (treatment filters). This well water is laden with minerals, typically referred to as 'hard' water, and has a significantly different taste that many residents dislike. Therefore, the Town limits the time that it uses the wells, when possible. The Utilities Director just approved the switch back to river water, and the brown water occurrences should decrease. If you turn on your faucet to brown water, please do the following:

- 1) Call Town Hall, so that personnel can be dispatched to the affected area to flush hydrants and minimize occurrences;
- 2) Turn on cold water within the home or a hose bib on the outside of the house and run until clear;
- 3) Do not turn on hot water, as this will draw the manganese water into the residence's water heater, with a potential to stain clothes in the washing machine.

There is also a potential that your home's service lines and plumbing fixtures will contain metals that react to the changing alkalinity, temperature, and minerals in the Town's domestic water. Older homes were sometimes built with different pipe compositions (galvanized iron, black iron, copper, etc.), and the combinations of metals can also cause the manganese build-up within the service lines to be released and other chemical reactions to occur.

Should you have any questions regarding this information sheet, please do not hesitate to contact Utilities Director Jack Castle at (970) 876-0460 or Town Administrator Jeff Layman at (970) 876-2353 Ext. 103 or [jlayman@townofsilt.org](mailto:jlayman@townofsilt.org)

---