

Common Myths and Facts about Discolored Water

Myth #1: The discolored water comes from old rusty pipes that need to be replaced.

False. Our pipes are not made of iron or any type of metal that can rust. They are made of PVC which is a very thick plastic construction grade material. Our infrastructure is in good condition. In fact, we experience very few leaks and breaks compared to municipalities. For example, on average, we experience a break or leak once every few months and major occurs less than that. A municipality can have multiple major breaks in one day! The discoloration in the water is caused by naturally occurring iron in our water, that when oxidized can cause discoloration, has been something we have had to deal with for years. Currently, we sequester the iron in our water using a safe and effective agent that mixes with the water to protect the iron in the water from oxidizing; creating crystal clear water. The required chlorine that we use to disinfect the water, is an oxidizer. The sequestering agent causes some of the iron to adhere to the inside of the PVC pipe. Once there is a change in velocity or volume, typically during peak usage days, a main break, or water pulled from fire hydrants for fighting fires, the iron deposits will break loose causing the discoloration. You can find out more information by visiting our website and reading the document "Understanding Iron in Groundwater."

Myth #2: The discoloration is from sediments inside storage tanks.

False. As indicated above, the discoloration is caused by naturally occurring iron in our water, the sequestering agent we add protects the iron from oxidizing. The discoloration is caused when there is a change in velocity or volume of use. The water in our tanks is crystal clear. We check it daily, even on weekends and holidays. There is no need to drain and clean the tanks to remedy discoloration issues; there is no sediment in the tanks causing the discoloration. Tanks are drained, cleaned and inspected annually.

Myth #3: SS Water is not doing anything about this problem.

False. When SS Water began in 1971, the decision was made to sequester the iron. The two state and federally approved methods to treat iron in groundwater are the use of a sequestering agent and the other is to filter the water. Back then, sequestering was the right choice, today with the amount of water we pump on a day-to-day basis, filtering would be more ideal. Over the past three years, the Board of Directors has been preparing financially to begin the expensive task of building filtration plants. To date, we have over \$1M set aside for the start of this project. We have used about one-third of these funds and recently purchased a large piece of property on CR 319 that surrounds our pump station. There will be three filter sites and each site has an estimated price tag of \$1.5M to \$4M each. We are presently in the design stages of our first filter location and hope to have the filter online in 2-3 years. Please keep in mind that even after filtration is complete, there is potential that the iron and sequestering agent could break loose from the coating in the lines and cause occasional discoloration. Management and staff are members of the system as well and live with the discoloration also, we understand that it is not only our responsibility to provide potable (safe to drink) water, but palatable (look and taste good to drink) water as well. Our water is always potable and we are working hard to make the water look and taste good too! We are always here to help. Call, email or Facebook message us *directly* for assistance. We do not respond to outside social media posts or comments.

Myth #4: There is nothing I can do once my laundry becomes stained from the iron discoloration.

False. Come by and see us at the office. We provide to all of our membership, FREE of charge, Iron Out, which will remove iron stains from clothing, appliances, fixtures, tubs, and toilets. All you have to do is come by our office and a bottle will be given to you as well as directions from our friendly office staff. The product works best if the laundry has not been dried. So, remember, do not dry the laundry. Keep in mind if you did dry them, sometimes you can rinse them with iron out and still get out the stains, so do not panic, Iron Out has saved a lot of laundry over the years!

Myth #5: Its SS Water's Problem and I have to pay to flush my lines.

False: Most Water Utilities, including large municipalities, have a base rate water bill which includes zero usage. The base rate is for only having the meter hooked up to your property. SS Water includes 2,000 gallons in the base rate free of charge every month for flushing purposes. Below is the proper flushing procedure:

1. Once you notice discoloration in your lines, call our office. We can let you know if there is a problem in the area. You can also follow us on Facebook, or sign up for alerts on our website. This will provide you with real time information on what could be going on in your area. Please note, during high usage periods, like spring and summer when folks start watering, discoloration could occur regularly, so please follow your Conservation Watering Schedule that was included in your bills and is posted online. This will help us help you as well as insure water for our future.
2. If flushing is recommended the procedure is as follows:
 - a. Go to the water faucet outside your home, furthest away from your meter. Turn on and allow to run for 10 minutes.
 - b. Turn on all of your cold water faucets in your home and allow to run for 10 minutes.
 - c. The water should come clear after 10 minutes.
 - d. If it does not, turn off the faucets and call our office.
3. Do not allow to run for longer periods than 10 minutes. If the lines come clear, you may flush your toilets 2-3 times to allow the tanks to refill with clear water.

Myth #6: My friends who have water from another company or from a well never have discolored water, so it has to be SS Water Only.

True and False: SS Water has wells in the Carrizo and Wilcox Aquifers. It is some of the best water in the State and Country. It is the same water that SAWS and other large municipalities like Schertz and Seguin fought to have many years ago and have wells in Wilson County and miles and miles of pipeline to pump the water we have to their cities. They too deal with discoloration, but have large filtration systems, like the one we are building to address the issue. Other surrounding water suppliers use different aquifers that do not have iron in their water and are not located in the zones that have the discoloration. They also use surface water from lakes and rivers. Private wells could be tapping different levels of aquifers in our areas, some may be tapping the iron rich areas, some may not. Also, private well water is not chlorinated, which as indicated above, chlorine oxidizes the iron causing the discoloration.

Other tips:

- **Do** flush your Water Heater every quarter. It's very easy to do, and is recommended by all Water Heater Manufacturers to extend the life of your water heater, regardless of your water source.
- Turn off your water softener, you do not need it, we have naturally soft water!
- If you have a whole home filter system, change the filters often, filters are there to catch the minerals, they will need to be changed. If they are clogged, your water will not be clear or you could experience low water pressure.
- If you are filling your pool, use only one hose, we know it takes a little longer, but more hoses pull more volume and we know that changes in volume and velocity can stir up iron and cause discoloration. Also, we highly recommend using a pool professional to treat your water, at least for your initial start-up.
- Sometimes low water pressure could be caused by a pressure regulator that needs to be replaced. We sell regulators to our membership at cost. Come by and see us at the office. You must be a member to purchase.
- Call us, email us, Instant Message us, Follow us on Facebook and Sign up for Alerts. Rely on the source for your information. We are the experts, we know our water and we know what to do to help and more importantly, we WANT to help.
- Update your phone numbers and email addresses so we can contact you in case of an emergency situation.
- Be a membership with a voice, attend Board Meetings and be part of your Water Corporation. Meetings are held the Second Monday of every Month at 7:30 pm. Agendas are posted on our website and at our office.