

# “Roily” Water

## What is it?

Cloudy water.

## Is it safe to drink?

Yes. Water is processed through a slow sand filter and disinfected with chlorine before entering the distribution system. There is no bacteria and the water is safe to drink.

## What causes it?

The usual culprit is an unusual or sudden acceleration of the flow of water through the pipes such as when a hydrant is opened. Water main breaks and excessive demand during hot spells can also cause roily water.

## Why is it yellow - reddish brown?

Most mains in our system are 100-year- old iron. As they age, fine rust sediment accumulates. Normally it stays on the bottom of the main. However, when water disturbances occur and stir up the sediment, discoloration occurs. Significant disturbances create more discoloration.

**Corrosion of galvanized service lines and household plumbing systems can also discolor water.**

## Can these pipes be cleaned?

Our annual hydrant flushing program, which occurs in the spring when water temperatures are colder, purges much of the sediment out of our 17 miles of mains.

Warmer water accelerates corrosion and keeps the sediment suspended in the water longer so flushing the system during the summer may worsen the situation.

## How long will it last?

It is difficult to estimate how long bouts of roily water will last or determine what parts of town will be affected. Variables such as location, duration and volume of water disturbed affect how long it will last.

## Where can I get more information?

Further information is available from Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection at [housatonicwater.com](http://housatonicwater.com).