



Update

Flushing! *Your troubles away*

Both potable and reclaimed water systems require flushing of water lines for testing and water quality issues. Potable water systems everywhere perform routine flushing operations. Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) is no exception. Flushing is accomplished through a number of methods. It is accomplished manually or automatically using fire hydrants or above ground flushing devices called blow-offs. Some blow-offs are controlled automatically with timers; others require a PCU employee to operate.

One of the major factors in designing water distribution piping systems is adequate volume and pressure for fire protection. Sometimes larger systems sized for fire flows result in low water velocities in areas where demand and available volume are not well matched.

Flushing increases velocities in these larger pipes, releasing air and sediment, and more evenly distributes the disinfectant in system. Flushing of fire hydrants may also take place to confirm fire flow capabilities which helps fire districts to maintain low insurance rates.

Currently, the volume of water used to flush Pinellas County's 1900 miles of water distribution system is one-half of one percent of the water pumped daily. Upcoming changes in water supply are anticipated to alter frequency, duration, and location of flushing activities. PCU measures and records all flushing through meters or by hydraulic calculations.

