



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 23, 2022

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Wildwood Officials Assure Water Safety as City Corrects Color

Wildwood officials today issued the following statement regarding the city's potable water:

"The city takes great pride in providing some of the best municipal water in the state. Safety is, and will remain, our highest priority as we deliver a safe, affordable, and adequate supply of this essential public need.

We realize, however, that the current appearance of water in some areas is not up to our usual standards, and we are working diligently to resolve the cause as quickly as possible and return our entire potable water supply to the aesthetic levels that have helped it win numerous awards.

Recent expansion of our drinking water lines has resulted in a temporary, intermittent increase in iron levels in the downtown, central, and west-side distribution areas. This iron poses no safety threat and is considered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other regulatory organizations as a cosmetic aspect rather than an enforceable standard.

Our water consistently meets or exceeds every EPA and Florida Department of Environmental Protection quality regulation. While cosmetics in no way affect safety, we do not find the color acceptable and assure residents we are addressing and will correct the situation as fast as we possibly can."

Mark Odell, Wildwood utilities director, explained that iron is naturally present in all ground water, and is in fact an abundant mineral in the earth's crust. When levels are low in the water supply, iron usually is not visible to the human eye, but when levels increase, it can be seen as a yellowish color.

Under consistently high pressure and flow rates, iron does not settle out of the water, but when flow rates diminish, iron precipitates and accumulates in the pipes. The recent expansion of water lines in the north section of the city caused iron that had settled in some lower-flow areas to be washed into the supply, resulting in the yellowish color some neighborhoods are seeing.

"While it remains completely safe to drink and use for cooking, washing, and bathing, we realize the color is off-putting to residents. We are continuing to pinpoint every afflicted section of our system so we can perform additional flushing in those areas," Odell said.

Affected neighborhoods identified to date include downtown and central areas east and west of US 301. The city is flushing specific sections daily and will perform a unilateral flush of 175 fire hydrants this Friday at 10:00 p.m. to clear additional mineral deposits.

Any resident still experiencing discolored water over the weekend is advised to flush their own water lines for 10 minutes to clear any residual iron in the pipes from the meter into the home.

If that does not eliminate remaining visible iron, they should call the after-hours service number, 352-330-1355, to have staff thoroughly investigate the situation for other potential causes and solutions.