

Water Conservation

On January 27, 2002, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg declared a City-wide Drought Warning as reservoir levels fell precipitously due to lack of precipitation in the upstate watersheds. A declaration of a Stage 1 Drought Emergency followed on March 26, 2002, and the City imposed mandatory water restrictions and penalties for violating conservation rules effective April 1. The Drought Emergency continued throughout the summer. However, nearly normal rainfall through the end of 2002 raised reservoir levels enough to allow the Mayor to lift the Drought Emergency on November 1, and return to a cautionary Drought Watch. In early January 2003, with reservoir levels above normal, the Mayor removed the Drought Watch. At the same time he urged New Yorkers to observe good water conservation habits, and obey the City's year-round water use restrictions, which include prohibition on watering sidewalks and lawns between November 1 and March 31, illegally opening fire hydrants, and watering lawns and sidewalks only during permitted hours from April 1 to October 31.

DEP's ongoing efforts to save water include: installing home water meters to encourage conservation; use of sonar equipment to survey all water supply piping for leaks; replacement of approximately 70 miles of old water supply pipe a year; and equipping fire hydrants with special locking devices. These programs and others have proven successful and together have reduced water consumption in the City by approximately 200 million gallons per day in the last ten years. This is more water than the City of Boston or Westchester County use in a day.

The average single family household in New York City uses approximately 100,000 gallons of water each year, at a cost of \$1.44 per 100 cubic feet of water (748 gallons), or about \$190.00 each year. New York City is fortunate to have reasonably priced drinking water; however, everyone should do their part to conserve this precious resource.

You can help save water by ordering a Home or Apartment Water Saving Kit. If you are an apartment building owner/manager or a homeowner, you can obtain a free leak survey. Call our Leak Survey contractor at (718) 326-9426 for information.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does any drinking water contain fluoride?

Yes, all New York City tap water contains fluoride. In accordance with Article 141.08 of the New York City Health Code, DEP, as the New York City water supplier, adds a fluoride compound that provides our water supply with a concentration of approximately 1.0 part per million (ppm) fluoride. Fluoridation began in 1966.

Should I buy bottled water?

You do not need to buy bottled water for health reasons in New York City since our water meets all federal and State health-based drinking water standards. Also, bottled water costs up to 1,000 times more than the City's drinking water.

At times, my drinking water looks "milky" when first taken from a faucet, but then clears up. Why?

Air becomes trapped in the water as it makes its long trip from the upstate reservoirs to the City. As a result, microbubbles of air can sometimes cause water to appear cloudy or milky. This condition is not a public health concern. The cloudiness is temporary and clears quickly after the water is drawn from the tap and the excess air is released.

At times I can detect chlorine odors in tap water. What can I do about it?

Chlorine odors may be more noticeable when the weather is warmer. Chlorine is a disinfectant and is added to the water to kill germs. The following are ways you can remove the chlorine and its odor from your drinking water:

- Fill a pitcher and let it stand in the refrigerator overnight. (This is the best way.)
- Fill a glass or jar with water and let it stand in sunlight for 30 minutes.
- Pour water from one container to another about 10 times.
- Heat the water to about 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Once you remove the chlorine, be sure to refrigerate the water to limit bacterial regrowth.

The aerators in my home are clogging with pieces of a small, whitish material. What is causing this to occur?

This problem may be accompanied by a significant drop in water pressure at the affected faucet in addition to a decrease in your hot water supply. The culprit is the hot water heater's "dip-tube." This is a long internal tube that delivers cold water to the bottom of the hot water heater tank. The tube, which is composed of polypropylene, may disintegrate. The problem affects approximately 16 million water heaters manufactured between 1993 and 1996.



Croton Aqueduct High Bridge crossing over the Harlem River. View from the Bronx looking towards Manhattan where High Bridge Water Tower can be seen. Late 1800's

Sometimes my water is a rusty brown color.

What causes this?

Brown water is commonly associated with plumbing corrosion problems inside buildings and from rusting hot water heaters. If you have an ongoing problem with brown water, it is probably due to rusty pipes. It is recommended that you run your cold water for 2 - 3 minutes if it has not been used for an extended period of time. This will flush the line. You can avoid wasting water by catching your "flush" water in a container and using it to water plants or for other purposes. In addition, brown water can result from street construction or water main work being done in the area. Any disturbance to the main, including the

opening of a fire hydrant, can cause pipe sediment to shift, resulting in brown water. The settling time will vary, depending on the size of the water main.

Is New York City's water "hard"?

Hardness is a measure of dissolved calcium and magnesium in the water. The less calcium and magnesium in the water ("soft" water), the easier it is to create lather and suds. Depending upon location, the hardness can be 1.0 grain/gallon (CaCO_3) for the Catskill/Delaware System, and 5 grains/gallon for the Croton System. New York City's water is predominantly "soft."

Contact Us

For a copy of this report, to report unusual water characteristics, or to request a free kit to test for lead in your drinking water, call **311** or from outside NYC call (212) NEW-YORK. TTY services are available by calling (212) 504-4115.

For more information on *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium*, please contact DEP's Parasitic Disease Surveillance Unit and the New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH) at: (212) 788-4728 or **311**.

To contact NYCDOH about other water supply health related questions call **311** or call the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Public Water Supply Protection at (518) 402-7650.

To report any pollution, crime or terrorism activity occurring both in-City and in the watershed, call the Water-Watch Hotline at 1-888 H2O-SHED (426-7433).

To view this 2002 Statement, announcements of public hearings, or other information, visit DEP's Web site at:

www.nyc.gov/dep

Este reporte contiene información muy importante sobre el agua que usted toma. Haga que se la traduzcan o hable con alguien que la entienda.

Ce rapport contient des informations importantes sur votre eau potable. Traduisez-le ou parlez en avec quelqu'un qui le comprend bien.

Rapò sa a gen enfòmasyon ki enpòtan anpil sou dlo w'ap bwè a. Fè tradwi-l pou ou, oswa pale ak yon moun ki konprann sa ki ekri ladan-l.

Ten raport zawiera bardzo istotną informację o twojej wodzie pitnej. Przetłumacz go albo porozmawiaj z kimś kto go rozumie.

В этом материале содержится важная информация относительно вашей питьевой воды. Переведите его или поговорите с кем-нибудь из тех, кто понимает его содержание.

這個報告中包含有關你的飲用水的重要信息。請將此報告翻譯成你的語言，或者詢問懂得這份報告的人。

이 보고서는 귀하의 식수에 관한 매우 중요한 정보를 포함하고 있습니다. 이 정보에 대해 이해하는 사람에게 그 정보를 번역하거나 통역해 받으십시오.



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