

# The WaterLine

Pennichuck Water

## A Guide to Colored Water

### Where does colored water come from?

You may occasionally experience colored water when running your water tap. There are a few different sources of colored water, each one showing up as a different color. If you experience white water, it means there is air in your water. Brown or orange water means that there is iron in your water. Black water means there is manganese in your water. Each of these sources of color are natural and would not harm you if you consumed the colored water. However, these sources of colored water, particularly those associated with iron and manganese, will stain clothes and water fixtures, so when you experience them you should stop using the water for other than sanitary purposes. Typically, the cause of this color evolves from a buildup of these sources in either the piping in the street or in your house.

### How do I get rid of the colored water in my house?

There are a few steps you can take as a homeowner to diagnose the source of colored water in your home. First, check and see which faucet the colored water is coming from – hot or cold? If it is coming from your hot water only, then this is an internal issue with your hot water system. You will need to call a plumber to further diagnose this problem and flush your hot water system. If it is coming out of your cold water, then the source of the colored water is either in your home water system or Pennichuck's water distribution system.

The first step to take if you have colored water coming out of your cold-water tap is to run a second tap. Run the tap that is in the closest proximity to the one that has colored water. Run this tap for about a minute, if no colored water comes out of this tap, there is an issue with the tap you where you first experienced the colored water. A plumber will be able to help you diagnose this issue. If colored water comes out of the second tap, then there is a broader issue going on. At this point, you should run your cold-water for 10-15 minutes from the cold-water tap located at the highest point of your home. Be sure to run the cold water only! You do not want to pull colored water into your hot water tank.

Why do we ask you to run your tap for 10-15 minutes? The colored water was likely caused by a disturbance in either the piping in your home, or Pennichuck's distribution system resulting in the release of colored water.

Disturbances in our distribution system may happen for a few reasons:

1. If there is a fire nearby, the system will experience a high-water flow event as the fire is being battled.
2. There is a period of high usage in your neighborhood.
3. There is a broken water main nearby.

A high flow event strips iron or manganese from the water mains in the street and releases it into the water flowing through water pipes in your neighborhood. The colored water in the our distribution system could then be pulled into your home's pipes if you are using water during or after the high flow event, resulting in your experience with colored water. If this is the case, running your cold-water tap will flush your homes' internal system and your water should clear up.

If this does not fix your issue, what do you do now? At this point, you need to give Pennichuck Customer Service a call at 800-553-5191. We will send someone out to your area to investigate a potential issue, and most likely flush our system. We will give you a call back when this is complete, and you then must flush your system for another 10-15 minutes to flush your internal system. In most cases, this should clear your lines and you will be all set!

If you still have colored water after your second flush, you will need to give us a call back. We will connect you to someone in our Operations Department that will be able to look at your specific situation and help diagnose an internal issue. We may suggest hiring a plumber to check the pipes in your home, or we could see what type of piping your homes has and make suggestions on how to fix the issue.

### Colored water is not normal!

The water that comes into your home should be clean, clear water. Even though this colored water isn't a health risk, you shouldn't have to deal with it often. If you are experiencing colored water frequently, and you must keep flushing your homes' internal system to clear it up, there is an underlying issue. It is always best to give our Customer Service Department a call when colored water situations occur as you may have an internal problem you are unaware of, or we may have had a high flow event we are not aware of and need to flush out our system to eliminate the colored water. Remember, Pennichuck Customer Service can't help you solve your colored water issue if we don't know about it.

## Protecting Your Meter in the Winter

If your pipes freeze, it could lead to thousands of dollars in repair costs and water usage. If a frozen pipe expands and cracks, water can start flowing out, and may displace your family and cause large amounts of water damage. You will also have to cover the cost of a frozen or cracked meter. The following tips can help you avoid this situation:

Maintain a heat of 55 degrees throughout your entire home or business, including the basement.

During freezing weather, open cabinet doors that contain pipes. This will allow the warmer air in your house to reach these pipes and prevent them from freezing.

Insulate your water pipes with products such as heat tape.

If you are leaving for the winter, there are two options you can try:

You can call our Customer Service Department and schedule an appointment to remove your meter and turn the water off at the street.

You can leave the heat on, and have someone regularly come and check on your home to make sure that everything is working properly.

## Fixing Indoor Leaks

Another efficient and easy way of conserving water is to check for and fix inside leaks – no matter how big or small!

Small leaks have the ability to cause problems in your home overtime and could eventually lead to larger leaks and damage. Many people do not realize how many gallons of water are being lost through even the smallest of faucet leaks. *According to the American Water Works Association's website, www.drinktap.org, a slow leak of 5 drips per minute wastes about 21.6 gallons of water per month, which in one year, could waste 262.8 gallons of water!* This can drive up your monthly water bill, and waste water that could have been used in a more efficient manner. The following is good way to check for leaks in your home:

- Turn off every source of running water, inside and outside (don't forget your ice maker!)
- Check the leak indicator on your meter This leak indicator looks like a red needle on the face of your meter, and if it is moving, then there is water running through your meter.
- Find where this leak is coming from. Check around your home and the plumbing inside your walls. Remember to check your toilets by placing 10-12 drops of food coloring in the tank, then waiting about 10-15 minutes. Do not flush the toilet during this time. If the food coloring leaks into the bowl, you have a toilet leak. Toilet leaks are often silent, so it could be hard to spot without trying this detection method! The most common cause of toilet leaks are worn out toilet flappers, which are easy to replace!

Please consider these tips while preparing for the upcoming fall season.



## Water-Sense Water Saving Fixtures

As summer winds down, we tend to think less about the need to conserve water. Even though we are using less water outside, it is still very important to ensure we are saving water inside. One good way of doing this is to install WaterSense approved products in your home. Here are some fun facts about WaterSense program and approved products:

- The Environmental Protection Agency designed the WaterSense program to test products for water efficiency. WaterSense has marked various different products for different areas in your home!
- WaterSense approved products include toilets, shower heads, faucets, and pre-rinse spray valves! There are also more in the works!
- By installing devices deemed water efficient by WaterSense throughout your home, you will be able to help the community conserve water throughout the entire year. This will also help you save money on your monthly water bill by lowering your consumption!



**PENNICHUCK®**

25 Manchester Street  
PO Box 1947  
Merrimack, NH 03054-1947

800-553-5191  
603-882-5191  
Fax 603-913-2362

[www.pennichuck.com](http://www.pennichuck.com)