



## **TOWN OF NORTH READING**

*Massachusetts*

### **Department of Public Works**

### **Discolored Water Update**

The North Reading Water Department has experienced a number of calls relating to brown or discolored water in the water system beginning in July and continuing into the start of August.

The Water Department believes the discoloration is primarily due to high water use that is the result of increased lawn over the past month. Lawn irrigation is generally concentrated to the hours between 4 am and 7 am, and the Water Department can see the water levels in our water tanks drop by 12 feet or more during this period of the day.

Similar to when fire hydrants are flushed in the fall, the water velocity in the mains due to these high demands increases during the early morning hours to the point where the fine iron and manganese sediment in the bottom of the water mains is becoming suspended in the water and appears as the discoloration at resident's taps. When the velocity slows down, the sediment settles out again, only to show up during the next high-demand period.

In addition to the high demands in North Reading, the Town of Andover is also reporting similar issues with discoloration in their water system. As North Reading purchases approximately 70% of our water during the summer months from the Town of Andover, issues with discolored water in Andover can impact North Reading. As we move toward the end of the summer, water demands in both communities should decrease and the discolored water issues should end.

The Water Department continues to work to diagnose this issue and minimize this problem. Residents experiencing issues with discolored water are asked to note the day and time the discoloration was first noticed, how long the problem persists, and whether the color is isolated to the cold water or hot water.