



KINSTON PUBLIC SERVICES

Buildings & Grounds, Business Office, Electric, Engineering, Environmental Services,
Fleet Maintenance, Meter Reading, Stormwater, Streets, Wastewater, and Water

Kinston, the right place ... Kinston Public Services, the right choice.

**THE FOLLOWING TIPS ARE PROVIDED FOR YOUR
INFORMATIONAL USE ONLY
KINSTON PUBLIC SERVICES RECOMMENDS YOU CONTACT A
PROFESSIONAL WHO CAN ASSIST YOU IN FLUSHING YOUR
WATER HEATER**

Water Heater Flushing Guidelines

If you are experiencing discolored water and fine particles in your water that seems to be worse when you are using hot water, you may have a build up of sediment in your hot water heater. This is usually worse in buildings that do not use a lot of hot water, as the water in the tank may be there for extended periods of time, allowing suspended particles time to settle out in the tank. Fortunately, you may be able to solve this problem by draining and flushing the heater and not have to replace it. Draining a few gallons a couple times a year is recommended to prevent a build-up of sediment in the bottom of the tank, but you can also drain the entire tank for a thorough cleaning.

Be sure you read and understand these instructions before beginning. You should also visually inspect your water heater to become familiar with all of the valves and connections. Read through any product information you have for your specific water heater and follow those instructions if they differ from the ones in this document. If you are unsure about anything, seek a knowledgeable person or professional plumber to perform the flushing.

CAUTION: The water in the heater is very hot and can cause burns. Avoid contact directly with the water. Gloves and eye protection are recommended.

TO COMPLETELY DRAIN THE WATER HEATER:

A typical water heater has a water supply and a power supply (either gas or electric). Turn off the power supply first. For gas models, turn the gas supply valve to "Pilot". For electric models, turn off the circuit breaker in the electric panel box for the home. There is also a thermostat on the heater that controls water temperature. Turn this off as well. Heating an empty tank will damage the water heater.

Now you need to shut off the water supply. If there is a valve on the supply line before the heater, turn it completely off. If there is no valve, you will need to turn off the water at the meter (this will shut off all water to the building so make sure you are not running any other appliances that need water). Next, open a hot water faucet in a shower or sink that is at the highest elevation

in your building. This will release the pressure in the line and prevent a vacuum from forming in the line.

The water heater should have two valves on it. Near the top is a pressure relief valve and near the bottom is a drain valve. You will need to connect a garden hose to the drain valve. The other end of the hose can be put in a bucket, a sink or run it outside. Open the drain valve completely by turning it counter-clockwise. Remember, the water coming out will be hot and may make the valve and hose hot as well.

When the flow stops, open the supply valve to allow water to enter the heater and flush out any remaining sediment. Continue until the water coming out the hose is clear, then shut off the water supply valve. Remove the garden hose and close the drain valve. Reopen the supply valve. Check the drain valve to make sure it is closed completely and not leaking. Go to the shower or sink faucet that you had opened at the highest elevation and close it when the water is coming out at normal pressure. Turn the circuit breaker or gas supply valve back on and turn on the thermostat on the water heater.

FOR PERIODIC PARTIAL FLUSHING OF THE WATER HEATER:

It should not be necessary to shut off the water supply for this procedure, but turning off the thermostat and power supply is recommended. Connect the hose to the drain valve or position a bucket under the valve. Open the drain valve all the way. The water should be cloudy at first, and then get clearer. Shut the drain valve off when clear. This should only take a few gallons of water. When clear, remove hose or bucket, make sure the drain valve is not leaking, and turn the power supply and thermostat back on.

When performing any work on your water heater, ALWAYS REMEMBER:

- The water in the tank will be HOT and can cause BURNS.
- Not turning OFF the power supply can DAMAGE the water heater if the tank is emptied.
- FIND all valves and INSPECT the water heater BEFORE you start the work.
- If you're not sure what you're doing, GET HELP from a plumber or knowledgeable person.

These tips are provided by the City of Kinston Public Services Department. If you have any questions, please call 939-3282 and ask to speak with someone in the Water Production Section.