

Our friend Toni Carlina, District Manager of Manhattan Community Board Six, notified us of the following important information:

Due to the activation of Shaft 33 of the Third Water Tunnel, which began mid-October, the Department of Environmental Protection has informed Community Board Six that area residents in CB 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in Manhattan may experience discolored or DARK water. This activation changes our water distribution from the Catskills/Delaware Reservoir System to the Croton Reservoir System. The water is safe to drink and does not require boiling, but washing clothes with discolored water may tint or stain garments. If sediment is present in the water, let it settle before drinking. The discoloration is expected to continue for the next 6 weeks.

The following information, that we believe would be of interest to you, has been supplied by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Beginning Friday, December 5th, the DEP will be deactivating the Croton water supply system and returning portions of the Bronx and Manhattan to the Catskill and Delaware water systems.

For the past month, DEP has utilized water from the Croton system as work was being performed on the Delaware Aqueduct in preparation for eventual repairs. New York City is fortunate to have three surface water supply systems and the Department of Environmental Protection can switch among them to accommodate operational needs, including construction projects.

As part of this return to the Catskill and Delaware systems, some residents in the Croton system service areas may experience discolored water. It is normal that when the direction of water in the distribution system changes, sediment is disturbed and water may run brown for a period of time. This same discoloration occurs when standard repairs are made after a water main break, and generally, periods of discolored water will be shortlived.

The Croton system routinely experiences seasonally elevated color levels, resulting from naturally occurring minerals present in the water, such as iron and manganese. At the levels detected in Croton water, iron and manganese do not present any health risks, and most multivitamins contain iron and manganese levels in excess of those present in Croton drinking water. Discoloration may be exacerbated in elevator buildings with roof tanks and water supply pumps.

Though discolored water does not present a health risk, DEP recommends that if the water is brown, residents should run the tap until the water runs clear. DEP tests approximately 2500 samples of city water each month at multiple locations in all five boroughs in order to ensure its high quality.

DEP anticipates that the switch back to the Catskill and Delaware systems will be complete by the week of December 15th, but we will continue to update residents as the work progresses. Please call 311 if you are experiencing discolored water, as it will help DEP better identify and resolve these conditions.