

Are you concerned about low water pressure? Usually the problem is low flow rather than pressure. Generally when customers say not enough water is flowing from a tap or fixture, something on the customer's property restricts flow.

Galvanized plumbing pipes

Corroded galvanized pipe in homes and businesses causes 90% of the water flow problems. Do you have galvanized pipe? Pipes are often exposed near the hot water heater, under sinks, or on the property side of the water meter. Galvanized pipe is silver when new, dulling to gray as it ages. It was widely installed in homes built before 1980.

Why is galvanized pipe sometimes a problem?

It corrodes on the inside. As water passes through, corrosion deposits build up inside and partially block water flow. Older pipes may be so corroded that even a pencil would not fit through the center of the pipe. Running water through a corroded pipe is like sipping through a coffee stirrer instead of a soft drink straw. Less fluid flows through. In most cases you cannot clean the inside of the pipe without causing leaks.

Can I test for corrosion?

- Run three faucets in your house at the same time. If flow decreases significantly at the first tap when you turn the others on, your pipes are probably corroded.
- If you have galvanized pipe and water is discolored when you first run the tap, you may have a corrosion problem. Let your tap run for 30 seconds or more – until the water feels noticeably colder. This flushes standing water out of the pipes and replaces it with fresh water.

What can I do about a flow problem?

- Run water from only one tap at a time. Avoid watering the lawn when you are using water indoors.
- Ask yourself whether the flow changed recently. Have you recently had work done on your plumbing? Was your service shut off for some reason? Check to see that the valve at your meter is open. It should be in a straight line with the pipe.
- If corrosion is blocking the flow of water, you may need to replace pipe. Consult a plumber to see if a pressure booster on your system might help.

- If pressure seems too high, consult a plumber to see if you need a pressure-reducing valve or if one has failed.
- Check cartridges on home water filter systems. If a cartridge is clogged, replace it.

Do low-flow fixtures affect flow?

Low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and toilets will reduce the flow of water. The state plumbing code has required that all toilets installed since 1992 be low-flow, high-efficiency fixtures.

Parts inside low-flow shower-heads and faucet aerators can become clogged. Remove the fixtures and flush them out routinely to maintain water flow.

Operator Flushing of fire hydrants and flush valves at 'dead end lines' also reduces pressure. This is done for a day or two near the end of the month.

Property owners are responsible for the condition of all plumbing and pipes that water flows through after it leaves the water meter. Some water flow problems are temporary. Water District #11 provides water to all meters with above the minimum required pressure of 20 pounds per square inch (psi). The average pressure on this water system is 60 psi.