

EGLE provides guidance on flushing plumbing at businesses and facilities prior to restarting operations

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The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is reminding property managers throughout the state to be prepared to properly flush the plumbing of facilities that have been temporarily closed in response to the state's efforts to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Statewide efforts to slow the spread of the virus have resulted in the closure or limited use of many buildings, such as restaurants and other businesses. This can lead to low or no use of water in these facilities. Water that sits unmoving in building plumbing for extended periods is at increased risk for leaching of metals (such as lead), reduced effectiveness of water treatment chemicals and bacterial growth.

Building owners or managers should proactively manage their building's water quality. Proper flushing of building plumbing before reopening is important to maintaining water quality. Flushing removes stagnant water from all areas of the building. This requires running water through all fixtures long enough to bring fresh water into the plumbing system. If possible, building plumbing should be periodically flushed during the period of closure. A thorough flushing of building plumbing should occur in the days before reopening.

There are several actions building owners and property managers can take prior to reopening:

- **Monitor for leaks:** Monitor the building during flushing to be sure there are no plumbing leaks or plugged drains that could lead to property damage.
- **Toilets:** Flush at least twice to move fresh water through the plumbing.
- **Faucets and Showers:** Run hot and cold water at full flow for several minutes each. Run cold water taps first, followed by hot water taps. If possible, remove faucet aerators before flushing.

Other Appliances and Apparatus: Flush other appliances and apparatus thoroughly, at full flow, to bring fresh water into the system. If you have an appliance that has a filter, such as a refrigerator or ice maker, follow the manufacturer's instructions for replacing water filters after flushing is complete. Flushing times will vary depending on building size and plumbing complexity.

EGLE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the American Water Works Association (AWWA) also publish guidance on building reopening:

[EPA Guidance on Maintaining or Restoring Water Quality in Buildings with Low or No Use](#)

[CDC Guidance for Reopening Buildings after Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](#)

[AWWA: Water utilities urge building managers to freshen water systems before reopening](#)

[Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association: Roadmap to Reopening](#)

[EGLE: Flushing Appliances When Water Service is Restored](#)

[EGLE: Guidance for Flushing School Plumbing](#)