

MEDIA RELEASE

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RE: **The Genesee County Health Department Urges Flushing Water at Restaurants, Businesses and other Facilities Prior to Reopening**

The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) is reminding building owners and managers to properly flush the plumbing of restaurants, businesses and other facilities that have temporarily closed in response to the COVID-19 virus.

Water that sits in building plumbing for extended periods has increased risk for leaching of metals (such as lead), reduced effectiveness of water treatment chemicals (such as chlorine) and increased risk for bacterial growth (such as Legionella).

Flushing, when done properly, removes stagnant water from all areas of the building. This requires running water through all plumbing fixtures long enough to bring fresh water into the plumbing system. A thorough flushing should occur in the days before reopening.

There are several actions building owners and 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. The duration of flushing times will vary depending on building size and plumbing complexity.



- Point of use (POU) faucet filters: Bypass any installed POU filters during initial flushing. Then run cold water through the filter for at least 15 seconds before use. Replace filter cartridges according to manufacturer guidelines.
- Appliances and Apparatus: Flush 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.
- Below are additional flushing 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](#)

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