

## **Steps to address water quality in buildings closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused many southeast Michigan businesses and facilities to shut their doors and suspend operations for an unprecedented length of time. In a moment with no shortage of things to worry about, the impact that this shutdown can have on the quality of the water sitting stagnant within building pipes may not be at the top of the public's list. However, when the economy reopens it will be the responsibility of individual building managers to mitigate these impacts on the water quality in their premise plumbing.

A simple and effective way to purge the water that has been sitting stagnant inside of a building's plumbing for days, weeks, or even months is to open all the water taps and let the water run freely. Hot water tanks may need to be flushed separately; instructions can be found on the GLWA website [here](#). Flushing the system forcibly removes rust, corrosion byproducts, or particulates, and replaces the potentially degraded water with fresh and recently treated water from the local main supply. For buildings and businesses that are accustomed to seasonal or intermittent use, flushing may already be part of a regular maintenance routine. But for others that have never been continuously shuttered for more than a day or two, people may not be aware of the potential danger posed by stagnant water, or of the steps that need to be taken to ensure water quality.

While GLWA and Member Partners maintain water quality within regional and local distribution systems, once that water leaves a main line and enters the pipes in individual customers' buildings, the responsibility rests on the building's owner or occupier. However, by spreading the message about the critical importance of flushing pipes in newly reopened buildings and providing further information on best practices, we can continue to support our communities even after we have fulfilled our obligation of delivering the highest quality water.

Each building is different, so plumbing system needs and flushing best practices will vary based on their size, configuration, condition, and type of usage. Regardless of these specifics, flushing is an easy best practice that can and should be applied before returning to normal operations anywhere that water has been sitting unused for a prolonged period.

### **Additional Flushing Resources:**

- [EGLE's Recommendations When Reconnecting Water Services](#)
- [US EPA's 3Ts Flushing Best Practices](#)
- [CDC's Guidance for Building Water Systems](#)
- [Toolkit: Developing a Water Management Program to Reduce \*Legionella\* Growth and Spread in Buildings](#)

- [American Water Works Association Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) page](#)
- [GLWA's Member Partner Resources Webpage](#)
- Detroit Water & Sewerage Department's Basic Flushing Instructions ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#)) ([Arabic](#))
- [Louisville Water Flushing Infographic](#)
- [Kansas City Water Flushing Webpage](#)

## Sharing GLWA's Communications

The GLWA Executive Leadership Team has provided continuous communication to all GLWA team members. While not all communication may be relevant to your community, we are providing these documents for your use and reference as you work through your own internal communication and process revisions. Internal GLWA communications are linked below:

- [Working Remotely IT Security Do's and Don'ts](#)
- [CEO's Update – Focusing on Transparency and Stability](#)
- [Wellness Resources for Team Members & Families](#)

These communication updates, GLWA's internal communications and other COVID-19 resources can be found on our [Member Outreach Portal](#) under "Documents." If you've yet to register on the portal, [click here](#) to learn how.

## Contact Member Outreach

Please know GLWA and the Member Outreach Team is committed to our relationship with members. Reach out at [outreach@glwater.org](mailto:outreach@glwater.org) or at (313) 964-9301 and let us know how we can best serve you. If you are experiencing an emergency in your community related to GLWA water or wastewater services, contact GLWA's System Control Center at (313) 267-6000.