

For immediate release

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Businesses must flush water before reopening, water utility says

Stagnant water in pipes poses potential health risk

The Waukesha Water Utility is advising businesses and other customers about important procedures to follow when reopening locations where water has been stagnant in pipes.

Plumbing systems that have not been used for extended periods, such as during the shutdown for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, can pose a health risk. Stagnant water in buildings that have been closed must be flushed before plumbing systems are used again.

Water that has not been moving creates a potential for growth of pathogens like Legionella, the cause of Legionnaires' disease.

As some businesses are starting to re-open, it's critical that people pay attention to their plumbing to make sure the water is safe.

Some recommended steps to maintain water quality as buildings/businesses re-open include:

- Review and understand the plumbing configuration and water usage in your building.
- Inspect the building.
- Flush hot and cold water through all points of use (e.g., showers, sink faucets, appliances, icemakers, hot water heaters, fountains, etc.). The purpose of building flushing is to replace ALL water inside building piping with fresh water, not just drinking water.
 - Cold water lines should be flushed before hot water.
 - Flushing may need to occur in segments (e.g., floors, individual rooms, specified zones, etc.) due to facility size and water pressure.
 - The first zone to be flushed should be the one nearest the building's water supply and then working outward from the supply.

Please see new guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency at:

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/information-maintaining-or-restoring-water-quality-buildings-low-or-no-use>.

Please contact the Waukesha Water Utility at 262-521-5272 with any questions.