



THE CITY OF STEUBENVILLE WATER DEPARTMENT

1575 University Blvd
Steubenville, OH 43952

PHONE: 740-283-6041
EMAIL: jjenkins@cityofsteubenville.us

May 6, 2020

Water Supply Flushing for Reopening of Buildings under Statewide Covid-19 Transition Plan

Dear Residents, Business Owners and their Employees,

Dr. Amy Acton announced on April 27, 2020 a statewide transition plan that depicts when certain businesses and services can resume in the State of Ohio. As buildings re-open that have had little to no water usage during the Stay at Home Order due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important to understand the condition of water that remains in the pipes and tanks. Buildings that have been closed completely or partially are at risk of containing harmful contaminants due to low water usage. It is imperative that these buildings flush the water system completely before reopening services to residents or the public. Flushing is easy and can restore the quality of water that is needed to ensure the safety of the occupants, residents, or employees. Flushing times and amount that is to be flushed will vary depending on the size of the building and how much of the water system has not been used.

The Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Health have also issued helpful guidance with step by step instruction to accomplish proper flushing of the interior water system of a structure. These very informational and helpful documents have been attached to better assist the Steubenville residents and business owners who have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. If you have any questions or need any assistance with the flushing process please call the Steubenville Water Filtration Plant at 740-283-6041.

Sincerely,

James R Jenkins
City of Steubenville
Water Superintendent



Flushing Your Home Plumbing When Water Service is Restored

When your water service to your home is turned back on after being shut off for a period of time, it is recommended that you flush sinks, faucets, showers, tubs and other plumbing components by running your water for a period of time and in a specific order. By following the step by step instructions provided below, you can help ensure any old water in your home's water pipes is flushed out and replaced with fresh water. If you need help with these instructions, please contact a licensed plumber or your public water utility.

Discoloration may occur during flushing. If the discoloration persists for more than 30 minutes, repeat the flushing protocol. If it continues to persist, contact a licensed plumber.

Instructions

- 1) Make sure all faucets in the building flow to a drain. If there are any water filters in the home, remove or bypass them.
- 2) Remove aerators and screens from every faucet.
- 3) Using the cold water handles, turn on all faucets – including kitchen and bathroom sinks, utility and mop sinks, bathtub and shower, etc. - and allow them to run during the entirety of the flushing process.
 - a) Start with the lowest floor of the home. If the home has a basement, start there.
 - b) Move to the next highest floor and turn on all faucets.
 - c) Continue until all faucets are turned on on all of the floors.
- 4) At the end of this process, water should be flowing from all the faucets in the building at the same time.
- 5) Let water run until the water is clear and the temperature has stopped changing at the last faucet turned on. If you do not have a thermometer, flush for at least 30 minutes. Larger homes may need to flush for a longer period of time.
- 6) Turn off the first faucet you turned on (lowest floor) and continue turning off faucets in the order they were turned on.
- 7) Repeat steps 3-5 using the hot water taps. *
- 8) Clean and reattach aerators to the faucets.
- 9) Flush, or run a cycle of, any appliance (ice maker, dishwasher, coffeemaker, laundry, etc.) for 10 minutes each.
- 10) Replace any filters and return equipment to service, if applicable.

Cleaning Aerators

- 1) Separate the parts of the aerator (screen, gasket, screw-threaded housing, etc.) and place them in a small container.
- 2) Soak the pieces in vinegar and/or water to help loosen dirt/particles.
- 3) Scrub the aerator pieces with a toothbrush or other small brush.
- 4) Rinse everything well, reassemble, and reattach the aerator to the faucet.

This guidance can be modified to fit the needs of larger structures, including office buildings, schools and hospitals. Please refer to the Ohio EPA document titled: Guidance for Premise Plumbing Water Service Restoration for more information on how to improve water quality or contact your water supply utility.

*Follow manufacturer's instructions for flushing water heaters.

To restore hot water service, refer to the water heater owner's manual and contactor the property owner, if applicable.



Department
of Health



Recommendations for Water Supply Flushing for Reopening of Buildings Under Statewide COVID-19 Transition Plan

Dear Building Occupants, Owners and Tenants,

In accordance with Ohio's statewide transition plan announced April 27, 2020, and as buildings re-open that have had little to no water usage during the Stay at Home Order due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to flush water that has been stagnant in both cold- and hot-water distribution lines and fixtures. Low water usage can contribute to bacterial growth, including *Legionella* which can cause a serious type of pneumonia called Legionnaires' disease. It can also cause other water quality issues with potential health risks due to the build-up of lead and copper in stagnant water that's been collecting in older pipes and fixtures.

As buildings reopen, it is critical to drain, flush, and if necessary, based on a review of building conditions, disinfect the hot and cold-water systems to remove harmful contaminants. Devices that store water, such as drinking water fountains, water heaters, storage tanks, and any droplet or mist-forming devices such as cooling towers, humidifiers, showerheads, and certain medical and manufacturing devices and process equipment should also be flushed and disinfected in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations or industry best practices.

The Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency have issued the attached "Guidance for Premise Plumbing Water Service Restoration."

Please note that this guidance applies to the water systems of all types of buildings that are unoccupied or partially occupied during the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to office buildings, manufacturing facilities, medical offices (e.g., physician and dentist offices, ambulatory surgery centers, outpatient centers, etc.), government facilities, and religious institutions. If you are a tenant of a building, we recommend that you share this information with the building owner, building manager, or management company and ask them to consider taking these precautions.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Ohio Department of Health
Bureau of Environmental Health & Radiation Protection
(614) 466-1390
BEH@odh.ohio.gov

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Division of Drinking and Ground Waters
Emerging Contaminants Section
(614) 644-2752

Sincerely,

Amy Acton, MD, MPH
Director
Ohio Department of Health

Laurie Stevenson
Director
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency