

Action Recommended

Reoccupying a building after an extended closure: Guidelines for protecting water quality.

When buildings are unoccupied for extended periods of time and water is not being regularly used, the water can sit and become stagnant. When this happens, such as during business shutdowns during COVID-19, water quality will degrade over time.

Denver Water is sharing these guidelines for businesses on how to clear or flush the water in their internal water systems before reoccupying the building. The goal is to replace stagnant water in the building's water system with fresh, high-quality water from Denver Water's distribution system. Denver Water recommends working with your building's engineer or facility manager for this process.

Guidelines: It is important to follow these in the order outlined below.

1. Turn on the **cold**-water inside the building (break room sinks, drinking fountains, utility closets, restrooms, etc.) on each floor.
 - a. Start from the furthest point away from where water enters the building (e.g. for a building with 5 floors, start on the fifth floor and work your way to the first floor. Remember to run cold water only.
 - b. The cold water has been successfully flushed when you feel the water temperature go from slightly warm to cold.
2. Flush hot water storage tanks (boiler and/or hot water tanks per manufacturer's flushing instructions) to displace stagnant/discolored water with fresh water.
3. Repeat step 1 using **hot** water.
 - a. The hot water has been successfully flushed when you feel the water temperature turn from warm to hot.
4. Flush and perform preventative maintenance on point of use devices or systems, such as cooling towers, systems providing additional water treatment, etc. per the manufacturer's recommendations as applicable.

Once all domestic water service lines, internal plumbing, and point of use devices/systems are flushed/properly maintained, the building can be occupied.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have also provided comprehensive guidelines for specific industries, such as hotels or restaurants. Those are available [here](#).

Denver Water recommends working with your building's engineer or facility manager for this process. If you have questions for Denver Water, please contact Customer Care Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. at xxx-xxx-xxxx.