

# NOTICE



**STOP: Please read before drinking water.**  
**Important lead reduction information.**

If you are occupying a location that has seen limited water use, be aware that the water may contain elevated lead levels. The reduced water use in buildings can cause stagnant water that is unsafe to drink. For example:

- Stagnant water can increase bacterial growth.
- Stagnant water may cause elevated lead levels.
- Stagnant water may appear colored and have a bitter or metallic taste.

## Recommended Actions

Before consuming water, it is recommended that you flush all taps in the kitchen and bathrooms using the steps below (see the box, How to Flush).

## Flushing to Improve Water Quality

**What is Flushing:** The process of flushing introduces fresh water to a building's interior pipes by removing the stagnant water. Flushing involves opening taps (e.g., faucets, showers, hose bibs) and allowing the water to run for a set time.

**Why is Flushing Important:** Flushing removes corrosion products and sediment from the plumbing and improves water quality.



## How to Flush

- 1.** Open all taps in the building unit including the showers or bath.
- 2.** Let the water run for 10 minutes.
- 3.** Close all the taps.
- 4.** Flush each toilet twice.

**\*\*Flushing does not require installation or maintenance of water treatment equipment. Flushing itself can be part of a routine practice to improve overall water quality.\*\***



## Recommended Actions for Water System Operators or Property Managers

To protect the health and safety of building occupants, building owners or managers can take proactive steps, outlined below, to inspect and maintain building water quality. Flushing, maintenance of water treatment systems, and communication with customers are recommended.



### Prepare for Flushing

- Review the Lead and Copper Rule limitations on flushing prior to collecting regulatory samples. Flushing is a good practice but cannot be done prior to sampling for lead and copper.
- Identify all points of direct use by building occupants (e.g., showers, taps) that should be points of flushing.
- Review any past problems with the plumbing system.

### Initial Flushing

- An initial flush and subsequent flushes may be needed to maintain water quality.
- Calculate the flushing time based on volume of water in the pipes. Plan on flushing for at least 10 minutes.
- Remove aerators from faucets and showerheads before flushing.
- Flush cold water before hot water.
- Flush by zone. Flush the zone closest to the building's water supply, and flush progressively outward from the supply.

### Prepare for Occupancy

- Follow manufacturer's instructions for starting up water treatment systems if they have been offline.
- Consider notifying building occupants of the steps you have taken to maintain water quality.
- Provide recommended actions to occupants returning after a low water use period.

## More Information

### Lead and Copper Rule

<https://dec.vermont.gov/water/drinking-water/water-quality-monitoring/lead-copper-rule-resources>

### Flushing Plan Examples and Videos for Large Buildings

<https://engineering.purdue.edu/PlumbingSafety/resources/flushing-plans>

### Maintaining or Restoring Water Quality in Buildings with Low or No Use

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/documents/final\\_maintaining\\_building\\_water\\_quality\\_5.6.20-v2.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/documents/final_maintaining_building_water_quality_5.6.20-v2.pdf)

### CDC Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/water/legionella/building-water-system.html>