

## Return to Normal

When things begin to get back to normal, water systems should follow proper startup and flushing procedures at locations that have been closed temporarily, or have a significant reduction in water use due to COVID-19.

### Startup and Flushing Procedures for Municipal and Large Water Systems

Facilities such as restaurants, schools, and businesses served by a municipal/large water system may be temporarily closed or have substantially reduced their water consumption due to the social distancing requirements. All public water systems have continued to monitor water quality in accordance with their water sampling plans including bacteria and all regulated water parameters. However, water may remain stagnant in the piping of closed facilities which can cause conditions that can increase the risk for growth of bacteria including Legionella, and create unsafe levels of lead or copper. To ensure that water is safe to drink when the facility is returned to normal service, it is recommended that all hot and cold taps be flushed through all points (faucets, showers, ice-machines, dishwashers) to reintroduce fresh water throughout the building. Hot water taps should be flushed until it reaches its maximum temperature, and cold water taps should be flushed until water runs cold, indicating fresh water from the main.

### Startup and Flushing Procedures for Non-seasonal, Stand-alone Water Systems

Small public water systems that have been temporarily closed such as schools, daycares, restaurants or small businesses should continue all scheduled water quality sampling as directed by DWGB, even if temporarily closed, to maintain your readiness to reopen when permitted to do so. Please see specific sampling guidance under other FAQs. This guidance applies to systems that have maintained water system pressure throughout the shutdown. Seasonal systems that depressurize their piping must follow the seasonal startup procedures and certification to the state.

To ensure that water is safe to drink following this temporary shut-down or reduction in water use, it is recommended that all hot and cold taps be flushed through all points (faucets, showers, ice-machines, dishwashers) to reintroduce fresh water throughout the building. Hot water taps should be flushed until it reaches its maximum temperature, and cold water taps should be flushed until water runs cold, indicating fresh water from the well source. Once thorough flushing is completed, please continue your scheduled water quality sampling.

### Additional Guidance

For additional guidance to ensure the safety of the buildings water system and devices after a prolonged shutdown please see the CDC's [Guidance for Building Water Systems](#), the Environmental Science Policy & Research Institute's [Flushing Guidance](#) and other references listed [here](#).

Guidance documents are available from other states for building water systems that have not been utilized for a prolonged period of time resulting in stagnation of potable water.

[Building Water System Return to Service Guidance](#) (from CT Department of Public Health)

[Building Flushing Information](#) (from MA Department of Environmental Protection)