



Building Water Management During Periods of Low Occupancy

Stagnant water, due to reduced building occupancy can result in iron deposit, sediment formation, bacterial growth, heavy metal contamination, and aesthetic concerns such as discolored water with objectionable tastes and smells. Frequent flushing of building water lines can reduce these issues. Therefore a routine flushing program is recommended to prevent building water problems. Guidance to prevent stagnant water from becoming an aesthetic issue and/or a health hazard is described below.

As buildings begin to open, Facilities Maintenance is reviewing the need for maintenance on each building water system and aggressively flushing risers and many fixtures in the buildings. Separate from the Facilities Maintenance activities, building occupants play an important role in supporting building water quality. To reduce the risk of exposure to bacteria, metals, and discoloration/odors/poor taste within the water, building residents will need to flush certain fixtures prior to returning them to use. Focus on the priority fixtures (listed below) where consumption of water is likely.

Priority Fixtures: Parts of the water system that are most important to flush because they have the greatest opportunity to make people sick include:

- faucets used for drinking water or food preparation,
- ice machines and refrigerators with ice makers (Clean per manufacturer's recommendations, check online for instructions, dump one or two bins of ice after the flushing/cleaning has been completed.),
- coffee makers and water dispensing units connected to the building water supply,
- kitchen sink sprayers,
- point of use filters (serving coffee makers, water dispensers...) that have been out of use for one month or longer should be replaced as they are an excellent medium for bacterial growth,
- eye wash stations and emergency showers (if they have not been on a normal flushing schedule),
- parts of the water system that are used by children, and
- components of the water system used by elderly people and susceptible people.

Note: When flushing a fixture, ensure the drain has sufficient capacity for the volume of water it's receiving.

Additional Considerations

- Flush for 5-10 minutes, longer if the water looks rusty.
- If possible, remove the faucet aerators prior to flushing.
- Sewer gases have the opportunity to enter the building through dry sanitary sewer traps. Pour water into sanitary sewer drains to wet the traps and prevent this from becoming an odor nuisance.
- Concerns about high purity water system maintenance should be addressed with the vendor. Flushing these systems prior to opening is highly recommended.
- Beyond reopening the building, consider implementing flushing procedures on Monday mornings and after a long break.