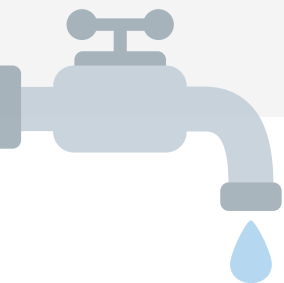


FLUSHING FAUCETS AFTER NON-USE

If your water system was shut down during the COVID-19 response, DEQ recommends flushing your system prior to serving the water. These recommendations should be considered anytime the water in your system has sat stagnant for more than three days.

Water that has sat stagnant won't add bacteria that wasn't already present in the system, but may allow for bacteria that are present to multiply. This may result in taste and odor issues, or in a concentration of bacteria that may cause illness when consumed. Water that sits stagnant in plumbing will cause the water temperature to rise. The increased temperature will result in a faster loss of chlorine residual, if your system disinfects, and may increase the concentration of dissolved contaminants, such as lead and copper, in the water.

The solution to avoid these concerns is to adequately flush your system after prolonged periods of non-use. Whether you receive water from someone else or have your own source (i.e. a well), the process is generally the same.



HOW TO FLUSH YOUR WATER SYSTEM

Starting at the furthest point from where water enters your system, turn on a faucet at full flow and allow the water to run until you can detect a significant change in temperature. Water that has sat stagnant in the service connection underground will generally be cooler than water that has been sitting stagnant in your indoor plumbing. You are trying to replace the stagnant water with fresh water from your source. The amount of time to detect that change in temperature will depend on many things including: how far from the source you are, the size of pipe and your systems pressure. Once you have detected the change, continue to run the water until you believe you have also flushed your service connection. Now that you have fresh water to the furthest point in your system, you can begin moving towards where the water enters your system, flushing faucets as you go.

- Open the cold-water faucet furthest from the source at full flow and allow the water to run until you can detect a significant change in temperature.
- Continue to run water for a few more minutes after temperature change is evident.
- Begin moving to faucets in order, from furthest to closest to your source, flushing all faucets as you go.
- It may also be a good idea to drain hot water heater tanks and flush those lines as well. Please remember that water from the hot water tank is not intended for consumption.

Another resource from EPA can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/information-maintaining-or-restoring-water-quality-buildings-low-or-no-use>

If you have questions, please call Mike Kropp at 406-755-8971 or 406-250-3172;
or Karl Carlson at 406-247-4444 or 406-628-2285