

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illinois Section of the American Water Works (ISAWWA) recommends flushing water pipes to maintain water quality during low-consumption, or no consumption, due to Coronavirus

Many buildings and businesses have been closed for weeks, or months, due to COVID-19 stay at home and work from home orders and policies. These work at home orders, and business closures, have reduced water usage within commercial buildings, industrial buildings and schools which can potentially result in stagnant water in building plumbing systems

Stagnated water in plumbing systems loses chlorine residual and is associated with health issues including bacteria growth, lead leaching, legionella and disinfection by-products (DPB's) formation. Many professional and regulatory agencies including; the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) the USEPA, the CDC and the Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association (ISAWWA) have policies and recommendations that building owners, building managers and schools should take to flush these vacant building plumbing systems now, and prior to reopening.

The general purpose of flushing is to bring fresh water into all sections of a building. This will require running fresh water starting at plumbing fixture closest to the water entry point to building and working thru entire plumbing system by running water through all plumbing fixtures including toilets, sinks, showers, drinking fountains, other water using appliances and miscellaneous plumbing fixtures. Developing a **water quality management plan** and properly flushing large buildings can be complex. Resources are available for building owners and managers and may include consulting with your local water utility, as necessary. You may contact your water provider if you have questions regarding your water.

Additional information on flushing has been published by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) at [https://www.isawwa.org/resource/collection/BADFEB6F-169B-4FE2-8321-A06042344FE5/IDPH Plumbing Program General Building Guidance for Reopening 5.13.20 002 .pdf](https://www.isawwa.org/resource/collection/BADFEB6F-169B-4FE2-8321-A06042344FE5/IDPH%20Plumbing%20Program%20General%20Building%20Guidance%20for%20Reopening%205.13.20%20002.pdf); the Environmental Protection Agency's Flushing Best Practices <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/information-maintaining-or-restoring-water-quality-buildings-low-or-no-use>; the Center for Disease Control web page <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>

About ISAWWA

The Illinois Section American Water Works Association (ISAWWA) provides resources for the advocacy of safe and sustainable water through enriching membership, mentoring, and increasing public awareness.