



Flushing Pipes to Maintain or Restore Water Quality

Homes, businesses or other buildings that have not been occupied for some time (weeks or months) can refresh and maintain water quality in the premises' plumbing by following a few simple steps. **Note: The building should have a functioning wastewater system with unplugged sinks and drains. Flushing times will vary depending on the lengths of water supply piping in each structure.**

1. Remove or bypass devices like point-of-entry filters or treatment units prior to flushing.
2. Take steps to prevent backflow or siphoning of contaminants into plumbing (e.g., close valves separating irrigation systems from home plumbing, disconnect hoses attached to faucets, etc.).
3. Organize flushing to maximize the water quality by starting with the outlet or faucet nearest to the location where the water enters the structure.
4. Turn on the cold water tap first at a medium to high flow rate at the first location (hose bib, faucet, showerhead, toilet), removing faucet aerators which may trap particulates, when possible.
5. Flush the first location for 2 to 3 minutes (until water temperature decreases, which demonstrates that fresh water is coming in from the water main) before moving to the next closest outlet. Turn off the water at the first location and move to the next closest location. Remove the aerator and flush the cold water tap again for 2 to 3 minutes. Proceed in a similar fashion until the furthest cold-water outlet is completed.
6. Return to the first outlet and flush the hot water in a similar fashion before moving to the rest of the hot water outlets. **Note: Older hot water heaters may need to be flushed before starting the flushing procedure for the hot water lines. In most cases a hot water tank can be drained directly, and it can take roughly 45 minutes to fully flush a typical 40-gallon water heater tank. Consult a plumber or call our service department for more information if unsure.**
7. After all flushing has been completed, replace all point-of-use filters, including the filter in refrigerators. Also, replace all the faucet aerators that were removed.
8. Additional flushing or other precautions may be warranted if the home or building has mixed plumbing materials (galvanized and copper for example) or other issues that may cause excessive disruption of pipe scale. Please call our service department with questions or concerns and we can provide additional information on these issues.



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Residents should be reminded that if point-of-use devices are installed they should be adequately maintained. Point-of-use devices or refrigerator filters may need to be replaced if unused for a long period of time. Consult manufacturer recommendations for the care and use of these devices.