

Media Release

From: Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District

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Contact: John Friedenbach, General Manager, 707-443-5018 or friedenbach@hbmwd.com

District Recommends Flushing Plumbing Systems for Buildings Shutdown During Covid

If your facility plumbing systems have not been used regularly during the Covid-19 Shelter In Place Orders, the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) recommends flushing your pipes prior to regular water consumption. It is possible that water left sitting in pipes for long periods will become stagnant and could contain increased amounts of bacteria. Typically, buildings can prevent stagnation through regular water use, which brings in freshly disinfected water.

HBMWD recommends the following process, however, you may want to consult the CDC's toolkit on Developing a Water Management Program to Reduce Legionella Growth and Spread in Building: A practical Guide to Implementing Industry Standards. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/dpk/diseases-and-conditions/vs-legionnaires/legionnaires.html>

Start with completely opening all faucets at once, including showers, flushing toilets, etc. This would get the highest velocity possible flushing through the service line. This should be done for approximately 15 minutes.

After flushing the entire building's water system, close all faucets, then go back through the building and open/ flush individual faucets one at a time. This would get the highest velocity possible flushing through individual outlets within the plumbing system. Start at the closest tap to where water enters the building and then work your way to more distant taps. So, for multi-story buildings, you would start at the bottom and work your way up to the top floor. If you started at the top, you would be pulling (potentially) stagnant water all the way through the plumbing system. If you start nearest to the service after the high-volume flush, then you systematically work your way through your plumbing system, pulling fresh water through as you go.

If businesses have tank water heaters, they may want to check with the manufacturer for flushing instructions/procedures. Be sure to run hot water through the taps too until the water gets to full heat, and then for a few minutes after that.

According to Melissa Martel, Director of Environmental Health for Humboldt County: *"Disinfection in our homes and businesses is an important part of keeping ourselves and our community healthy, and following these guidelines is critical in ensuring that clean water flows from our faucets."*

HBMWD does not accept any liability for not completely flushing individual water systems.

If individuals have questions, they should contact their water service provider.