



Kenosha Water Utility shares guidelines for reinstating stagnant plumbing systems as businesses re-open

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KENOSHA – Modifications made to Governor Evers's Safer at Home Order will allow some non-essential businesses to re-open. These businesses have been closed since the Safer at Home Order went into effect on March 24, 2020. The Kenosha Water Utility (KWU) is relaying guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for reinstating plumbing systems which have been stagnant, in order to ensure customers receive the freshest water possible.

Stagnant water can cause conditions that increase the risk for growth and spread of Legionella and other biofilm-associated bacteria. Stagnant water also can lead to low or undetectable levels of disinfectant, such as chlorine. People can follow guidelines to ensure their water system is safe to use after a prolonged shutdown and minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water. The following steps should be taken to prepare a plumbing system prior to re-instituting water use:

1. Start at the lowest level in the building, such as the basement. Remove screens and aerators from all faucets on this floor. The aerator is located at the end of the faucet and includes a screen. A rubber jar opener or pliers may be needed.

2. Completely open all faucets on the lowest level using only cold water.

3. While keeping the lowest level flushing, move to next highest floor in the building and repeat the same process of removing screens and aerators, followed by completely opening all faucets using only cold water.

4. Repeat the same procedure for any other floors.

5. Once the top floor in the building is reached and all faucets are open, continue running all faucets for 10 minutes.

6. After 10 minutes, turn off all faucets starting at the top floor and work down to the lowest level in the building.

7. Rinse and reattach any screens and aerators that were removed.

Additionally, when water is stagnant, hot water temperatures can decrease to the Legionella growth range (77–108°F, 25–42°C). Ensure the water heater is properly maintained and the temperature is correctly set to a minimum of 120°F. However, be careful of scalding which can occur at temperatures greater than 130°F.

Additional information regarding these guidelines can be found on the CDC's website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>

For questions, please contact the Water Production Plant at [262-653-4330](tel:262-653-4330).