

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## ABOUT DRINKING WATER IN SCHOOLS & COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

**When water isn't flowing, microorganisms and lead can build up in the building's internal plumbing. If, during this stay-at-home period, your school or commercial building has been closed or used only on a limited basis, there could be a build-up of lead and microorganisms in the building's internal water system.**

### What happened while your building was unoccupied.

The water systems for schools and buildings begin at the meter where water enters the building and includes all plumbing, storage and fixtures. When water sits unused in pipes, it can allow microorganisms to grow and lead to leach into the drinking water.

As water sits for long periods of time, the disinfectant in the water dissipates and loses its effectiveness. As a result, microorganisms can grow on pipes, fixtures and tanks. Some of these microorganisms may have the ability to cause disease in some people.

Similarly, lead can leach into the drinking water when water sits in pipes for extended periods of time. That's because coatings on the pipes can weaken and destabilize. As this occurs, lead particles can dissolve and leach into your drinking water.

### How to prepare your school or building to be occupied again.

Before you allow students, employees and visitors back into your building, we strongly recommend flushing all water in the entire building, including all water-using appliances such as ice machines, coffee-makers and dishwashers. Flushing clears out the low-quality water that accumulated in pipes and appliances during periods of low use and replaces it with clean, fresh water.

Flushing should begin immediately, even if you're not planning to return to work this week. Flushing early will improve the water quality and bring a quicker return to normal water quality conditions.

Flushing your building's internal water system is a low-cost way to help protect your employees, students, customers and visitors. In fact, flushing the internal plumbing system in a 10,000 square foot building costs less than five dollars.





## Before reopening, flush your building's internal plumbing to help protect your employees, students and visitors.

### How to flush the water system in a small building.

First, locate the taps on each floor that are farthest from that floor's point of water distribution and flush the cold water for 10 minutes. Next, flush both the hot and cold water at all sinks, showers, appliances and faucets.

Depending upon the size of your building and the water pressure, flushing may need to occur in segments, such as different floors or individual rooms. The purpose of flushing is to replace all the older water in the building water system and replace it with clean, fresh drinking water.

Flushing your building's water system is a low-cost way to help protect the health and safety of your employees, students and visitors. In fact, flushing the internal plumbing system in a 10,000 square foot building costs less than five dollars.

### How to flush the water system in a school or large building.

Large buildings, such as schools, hotels or commercial and industrial buildings need an initial and follow-up flushing. The initial flushing will draw contaminants through and out of the system while bringing in disinfectants. The follow-up flushing will move clean, fresh water throughout the building and re-introduce corrosion inhibitors to reduce the risk of lead leaching into the drinking water.

#### The initial flush

It's important to identify and flush as many water outlets as possible, including utility sinks, hose taps, drinking fountains, etc. to remove contamination from the water system.

**Step 1: Clean all water fixtures.** Remove and clean the aerators on all faucets, clean all showerheads, and replace or maintain all point-of-use filters.





**Step 2: Flush cold water zone-by-zone.** (*Zones are branches of the building's water system with a common source or parts of the building water system served by a common riser.*)

The first zone to flush should be the one nearest to where the water supply enters the building. Begin at the tap nearest to where water enters that zone. Flush the cold water by opening the tap wide. Open other taps on the same branch, moving from the faucet nearest the water origin to the farthest faucet.

Continue flushing until the final tap is flushed for at least 5 minutes and the cold-water temperature is steady. Continue to flush all zones moving outward from the supply.

**Step 3: Flush hot water zone-by-zone.** Following the process outlined above, flush each tap until the hot water reaches its maximum temperature.

## Follow up flushes

Flushing should be conducted for 12 weeks following the initial flush. This is the approximate amount of time needed to restabilize the protective scale that reduces the risk of lead leaching into the drinking water. In addition to weekly flushing, be sure to open each tap in the building at least once a day for the 12 week period.

### Flush the entire building once a week

**Step 1: Flush the cold water zone-by-zone.** Begin at the tap that is closest to where the water enters the zone. Open the tap wide and flush each tap for at least 5 minutes.

**Step 3: Flush hot water zone-by-zone.** Begin at the tap nearest to where the water enters the zone. Open the tap wide and flush each tap for at least 5 minutes.

**Flush your building's internal water system regularly even when the system has recovered from a lengthy stagnation. Flushing the water system is a low-cost way to help to protect your employees, students and visitors. It costs less than \$5 to flush the water system in a 10,000 square foot commercial building.**

## For more information...

To learn more about flushing your building's internal plumbing visit [www.PVWC.com/building](http://www.PVWC.com/building) or contact customer service at 973-340-4300.



## Passaic Valley Water Commission

1525 Main Avenue, Clifton, NJ 07011  
973-340-4300 • [www.PVWC.com](http://www.PVWC.com)

# While you're at home, lead and microorganisms may build-up in the water in buildings & schools

Learn how to protect your students, visitors and employees.



## Passaic Valley Water Commission

1525 Main Avenue • P. O. Box 230  
Clifton, New Jersey 07011-0230

PVWC Public Outreach Group

This report contains information about your drinking water. If you do not understand it, please have someone translate it for you.

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

આ અહેવાલ મેં તમારા પીવાના પાણી વિષે  
જાણવા ની જાણકારી આપવા મેં આવી છે.  
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તોમ તેને આપે કાલ કરો

للعلومات في هذا التقرير تحتوي على  
معلومات مهمة عن مياه الشرب التي  
تشربها. من فضلك اذا لم تفهم هذه  
للعلومات اطلب من يترجمها لك.



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