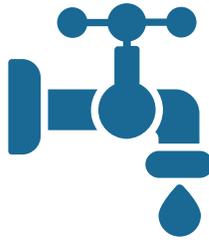


# ENSURING PLUMBING SAFETY

## WHEN REOPENING BUILDINGS



**Drinking water provided by the City of Escondido continues to meet all state and federal drinking water standards.**

**Many commercial and industrial buildings remained operational during the COVID-19 pandemic, and HVAC and water systems are maintained and operated even though many employees are working remotely.**

**Plumbing inside buildings that have been closed due to COVID-19 will require special care when reopening. After drinking water leaves the City's distribution system and enters a private plumbing system, water quality can deteriorate if water becomes stagnant.**

- This issue affects commercial and industrial buildings worldwide.

**Building owners and managers should take special care to ensure water quality and safety when reopening buildings that have been vacant or have had periods of low water use.**

- Bacteria can grow in pipes, fixtures and associated equipment (like fountains, cooling towers and HVAC systems) that are not used for even a few days.
- Schools commonly flush pipes before children and teachers return from breaks.

**Flushing the entire building plumbing system will help prepare a building for occupancy.**

- During flushing, all valves and fixtures should be fully opened, aerator screens should be removed, and shower heads should be disinfected.
- More information for building owners and managers is available at the San Diego County Water Authority's web site ([sdcwa.org](http://sdcwa.org)).

**Prudent action can help avoid problems with water quality in commercial and industrial buildings. If building plumbing is not flushed, poor water quality could result when occupants first use water.**

- Chlorine used to disinfect drinking water breaks down over time in an unused plumbing system, which will allow bacteria to flourish.
- Other pathogens can grow and corrosion concerns can increase in inactive plumbing systems.

# FLUSH YOUR WATER SYSTEM

Flushing hot and cold water through all points of use (e.g., showers, sink faucets) is part of the process for ensuring safety when reopening buildings after long periods of inactivity. Flushing may need to be done in segments (e.g., by floor or individual rooms) due to facility size and water pressure. The purpose of building flushing is to replace all water inside building pipes with fresh water. Flush until the hot water reaches its maximum temperature.

