



CITY OF LA CROSSE UTILITIES WATER - SEWER - STORM

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PSA: Water Quality and Your Business

Make Sure Your Building's Water System and Devices are Safe to Use as you Re-open

Modifications made to Governor Evers's Safer at Home Order May 11, 2020 will allow some non-essential businesses to re-open. These businesses may have been closed since the Safer at Home Order went into effect on March 24, 2020 with little to no water use

The La Crosse Water Utility 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 lead to low or undetectable levels of disinfectant, such as chlorine. Stagnant water can cause conditions that increase the risk for growth and spread of Legionella and other biofilm-associated bacteria. 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 stagnant 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. Drain and clean water storage facilities and hot water heaters.
3. Completely open all faucets on the lowest level.
4. While keeping the lowest level faucets running, move to next highest floor in the building and repeat the same process of removing screens and aerators, followed by completely opening all faucets.
5. Repeat the same procedure for any additional floors.
6. Once the top floor in the building is reached and all faucets are open, continue running all faucets for 10 minutes.
7. After 10 minutes, turn off all faucets starting at the top floor and work down to the lowest level in the building.
8. Rinse and reattach any screens and aerators that were removed.

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>

Now may also be a good time to check your water heater. 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.

For questions, please contact the La Crosse Utilities Office at 608-789-7536.