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## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation

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Statewide efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 have resulted in the closure or limited use of many buildings, such as restaurants and other businesses. This can lead to low or no use of water in these facilities. Water that sits unmoving in building plumbing for extended periods is at increased risk for leaching of metals (such as lead), reduced effectiveness of water treatment chemicals and bacterial growth.

As businesses reopen or prepare to do so, the Lenawee County Health Department (LCHD) is encouraging building owners or managers to not only implement COVID-19 precautions, but also proactively manage their building's water quality. Proper flushing of building plumbing before reopening is important to maintaining water quality. Flushing removes stagnant water from all areas of the building. This requires running water through all fixtures long enough to bring fresh water into the plumbing system. Flushing times will vary depending on building size and plumbing complexity. If possible, building plumbing should be periodically flushed during the period of closure. A thorough flushing of building plumbing should occur in the days before reopening.

In order to help businesses manage their water quality, the CDC has provided detailed information on their [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](#) webpage. Additionally, there are several actions building owners and property managers can take prior to reopening:

- Monitor for leaks: Monitor the building during flushing to be sure there are no plumbing leaks or plugged drains that could lead to property damage.
- Toilets: Flush at least twice to move fresh water through the plumbing.
- Faucets and Showers: Run hot and cold water at full flow for several minutes each. Run cold water taps first, followed by hot water taps. If possible, remove faucet aerators before flushing.
- Other Appliances and Apparatus: Flush other appliances and apparatus thoroughly, at full flow, to bring fresh water into the system. If you have an appliance that has a filter, such as a refrigerator or ice maker, follow the manufacturer's instructions for replacing water filters after flushing is complete.

For more business-related COVID-19 guidance, please visit LCHD's Businesses and Employer's webpage at <http://www.lenawee.mi.us/932/COVID-19---Businesses-and-Employers>. Questions can be directed to 517-265-5226, option 5, or [lenaweehd@lenawee.mi.us](mailto:lenaweehd@lenawee.mi.us).

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The mission of the Lenawee County Health Department is to promote a safe and healthy environment.