



Guidance on Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdowns

At EPWater, we place the highest value on safe drinking water. Our employees work around the clock to treat and monitor water to ensure it is safe, reliable and clean. However, businesses and large establishments that have been complying with the City's Stay at Home Order for several weeks may experience on-site water quality issues upon reopening.

EPWater is providing the following guidance to help you to properly prepare your building for reopening. Please follow the tips below.

1. If upon re-entry you experience a strong wastewater smell, it's possible that the p-traps in the building have dried out and allowed gases into the building. You should ventilate the building before beginning flushing procedures. Make sure to add water to all drains, especially floor drains to prevent further gas intrusion.
2. Do not drink or use any first draw water until all water lines (cold and hot) have been flushed.
3. Remove or bypass devices, such as point-of-entry treatment units, prior to flushing. Have your point-of-use devices serviced.
4. Open all faucets simultaneously to flush the service line.
5. Flush the cold-water lines first, and then the hot-water lines. Turn up your water heater to the highest setting and let it warm up for 30 minutes prior to flushing hot water taps. You may find that the hot water is discolored or has a rotten egg smell, and in that case, the hot water tank needs to be thoroughly flushed. After flushing, if the water quality doesn't return to normal, the water heater may need to be drained and refilled, possibly with the assistance of a plumber.
6. Run enough water through all outlets (e.g., hose bibs, faucets, showerheads, toilets, etc.) for 10 to 30 minutes until you feel that quality has returned to normal.
7. Replace all point-of-use filters, including the filter in refrigerators.
8. Additional precautions may be warranted if there is excessive disruption of pipe scale or if there are concerns about biofilm development. Actions that might be warranted include use of bottled water, installation of a point-of-use device, or engaging a contractor to thoroughly clean the plumbing system.

EPWater is dedicated to helping our customers reopen our economy safely. If you have further questions, please call the EPWater water quality line at 915-594-5733.

Thank you,

El Paso Water staff