

# Reopening Buildings for Building Owners / Operators

Source: [Canadian Water and Wastewater Association](#)

## Before you start - map or sketch your entire water system

- Identify zones and include all treatment equipment, pumps, valves, tanks, etc.
- List all outlets/fixtures such as taps, fountains, showers, etc.
- Be sure to include any connected food units like ice or coffee makers

## Flush your entire system

- Start where the water enters the building and work from closest to furthest, closest zone to furthest zone, closest outlet to furthest outlet
- Flushing requirements vary but run the water until the water maintains a constant cold temperature and the disinfectant (like chlorine) is detected
- This should be a rigorous flush so you want to open taps fully (remove the aerator filter or shower head – failure to do so may result in plugged or damaged fixtures), but be aware this could cause greater spray and aerosols
- Staff should wear appropriate PPE such as gloves, mask (N95 is recommended), and eye cover while flushing
- If you're experiencing sewer smell, it may be the result of emptied or dried plumbing traps, flushing may resolve this issue

## Hot water

- Flush your cold water system first then, your hot water system
- Keep hot water tanks above 60°C (140°F) to ensure a temperature over 50°C throughout the system. Be sure to flush the tank fully to replace all of its water. You may consider draining the tank, but be cautious as this could stir up sedimentation or cause syphoning concerns.
- Then flush the hot water system from closest to furthest from the tank

## Cleaning

- If possible, clean, disinfect and rinse all outlets, screens etc.

## Shock your system

- Shock chlorination may only need to be considered if you have a large system with remote branches, storage tanks, or you still detect issues after flushing, if you serve vulnerable populations or have a history of pathogen problems
- Such system shocking should be conducted by a water treatment professional

## Testing

- For smaller buildings, after flushing, you should be able to feel a consistent cold temperature and even detect disinfectant (such as chlorine by smell)
- For larger buildings and any building serving vulnerable populations, professional testing is highly recommended
- Testing for disinfectant residual - simple equipment and/or testing services are available from local water treatment companies, plumbers and pool professionals
- Testing for microbial pathogens – for complex systems, buildings serving vulnerable populations, or any with a history of contaminations (like Legionella) – these issues are often related to water in HVAC systems. Contact your local health unit should for assistance.