



# ICC SMART TIPS

## *Flushing Pipes*

As schools and other facilities begin to reopen following prolonged closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) reminds building managers to flush pipes to protect occupants from unsafe water.

Copper and lead which are toxic chemicals and bacteria like Legionella thrive in stagnant water. Frequent flushing of pipes is necessary to eliminate contaminants and ensure freshwater is moving through the plumbing. It is recommended that pipes be flushed twice-weekly during a building closure and again on days leading up to the building reopening.

### ICC SMART TIPS ON FLUSHING

- Flush all toilets at least twice;
- Flush at full flow for at least 2 minutes (10 minutes is recommended) starting with cold lines first, then hot lines from faucets and showers;
- Flush appliances such as refrigerators until you can smell chlorine in the water. You should also discard old ice in the machine and follow manufacturers' instructions to replace water filters.



### ADDITIONAL STEPS TO TAKE TO MINIMIZE LEGIONELLA RISK

- Remove and clean all faucet aerators.
- Ensure water tanks, heaters, and softeners are properly maintained.
- Set water heater temperature at least 140 degrees.
- Use cold water for drinking and cooking, otherwise heat on the stove or microwave.
- Ensure cooling towers are cleaned and well-maintained.
- Safety equipment such as fire sprinkler systems, eye washes, and safety showers should be cleaned, flushed and disinfected according to manufacturers' specifications.

For additional tips visit the US Centers for Disease Control website at:  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html).

Consumers can also contact the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791 or visit [www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-09/documents/flushing\\_best\\_practices\\_factsheet\\_508.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-09/documents/flushing_best_practices_factsheet_508.pdf).