

## Re-Start of Dormant Water Systems

Issued 27-May-2020

### Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ

The IKC recently issued a *Church Employee and Volunteer COVID-19 Pandemic Safety Plan Guidance* document for churches to develop their own safety plan. Within that guidance was an emphasis on the water system where usage may have been reduced or dormant during the COVID-19 shutdown.

The EPA warns, “*Building and business closures for weeks or months reduce water usage, potentially leading to stagnant water inside building plumbing. This water can become unsafe to drink or otherwise use for personal or commercial purposes...Additionally, turning on water after a prolonged period of non-use could disrupt pipe and plumbing scales to such an extent that microbial and chemical contaminants could be released into the water. EPA recommends that building owners and managers take proactive steps to protect public health by minimizing water stagnation during closures and taking action to address building water quality prior to reopening.*”

#### Purpose:

This document is designed to provide churches with resources to reduce the possibility of two potential microbial hazards, mold and *Legionella* (the cause of Legionnaires’ disease), prior to opening a church or facility that has been dormant for an extended period. The guidelines set forth are the compilation of recommendations from multiple resources including, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Water Works Association (AWWA), American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), Indiana American Water, and Louisville Water.

#### Guidelines:

The resources listed below provide guidelines for:

- 1) Proper flushing procedures of fixtures such as, drinking fountains, faucets, toilets, showers, hot water tanks, dishwashers, refrigerators, coffee makers, ice machine, sprinkler systems, etc.
- 2) Replacement of point-of-use filters including refrigerators.
- 3) Maintenance of hot water system temperature to prevent Legionella growth.
- 4) Inspection and maintenance of building plumbing.
- 5) Mold detection, monitoring, and remediation.

#### Resources:

##### **EPA**

“Maintaining or Restoring Water Quality in Building with Low or No Use” (PDF), (4 pp, 1 MB, May 2020, Version 2)

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/information-maintaining-or-restoring-water-quality-buildings-low-or-no-use>

##### **CDC**

“Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation”

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>

“Toolkit: Developing a Water Management Program to Reduce Legionella Growth and Spread in Buildings: A Practical Guide to Implementing Industry Standards”

<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/wmp/toolkit/index.html>

**AWWA**

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Coronavirus#10681543-shutoffs-and-return-to-service-guidance>

**ASHRAE**

“Guideline 12-2020 -- Managing the Risk of Legionellosis Associated with Building Water Systems”

[https://www.techstreet.com/ashrae/standards/guideline-12-2020-managing-the-risk-of-legionellosis-associated-with-building-water-systems?product\\_id=2111422](https://www.techstreet.com/ashrae/standards/guideline-12-2020-managing-the-risk-of-legionellosis-associated-with-building-water-systems?product_id=2111422)

**Indiana American Water/American Water**

“Has Your Facility Been Closed For Weeks? Flush The Pipes”

<https://dnnh3qht4.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/School-Building-Flushing-After-Closings.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=cGGiR%2B676kNmEY6UhS14g2Oj3mVHtcdUOIzIOGq9srw%3D&timestamp=1586354747402>

**Louisville Water**

“Flushing the Lines”

<https://www.louisvillewater.com/flushing>