

# FLUSHING YOUR HOME: HOW TO FLUSH AN ENTIRE HOUSE PLUMBING SYSTEM

Sometimes it is necessary to clean the plumbing components in your home. These instructions will help by providing some step-by-step instructions on how to do a complete flush.

To protect the health and safety of our communities, we recommend that you read carefully and follow the steps for flushing. Thank you for your cooperation. NOTE: After flushing, your water filters need to be replaced. If you have any point of entry water treatment system such as a water softener or filter, please refer to the instruction manual for replacement of the filter.

At the end of this document, you will find instructions on how to clean your faucet aerator. These instructions should be followed after conducting a house plumbing flush.

## Step-by-Step Instructions

Please complete these steps in the order set out below. Finish each step completely before moving on to the next step.

### 1. Flush ALL hot water taps for 15 minutes

Begin the flushing procedure by opening the hot water taps in your bathroom(s). Open ALL hot water lavatory (sink) fixtures, hot water bath fixtures, and any other hot water fixtures, such as kitchens, wet bars, etc. Run these hot water fixtures for at least 15 minutes. Shut water off after 15 minutes. After you have flushed each hot water faucet for 15 minutes, your hot water heater will be safe for use.

### 2. Flush ALL cold water taps for 5 minutes

Once the hot water tank and hot water piping have been flushed, open ALL of the cold water fixtures, flush each toilet at least one time. Run these cold water fixtures for at least five minutes. Shut water off after five minutes. This does include the water in your refrigerator water dispenser.

### 3. Flush ALL remaining Appliances and Faucets

(Before starting step 3, please see **FLUSHING YOUR APPLIANCES** for more information.) Open any remaining fixtures such as hose bibs, external faucets or fixtures not used for drinking for at least five minutes to finish the plumbing system flushing. Take additional steps to remove water from other appliances. See **FLUSHING YOUR APPLIANCES** for more information (Page 2). This includes:

- Ice Makers
- Dishwashers
- Washing Machines
- Humidifiers
- CPAP Machines
- Oral, Medical or Health Care Devices
- Baby Formula
- Water Filters
- Water Softeners
- Filters, point of use and whole house

**Discoloration may occur during flushing, this is expected and not a health issue.**

**Any lingering smell, which is expected, is not a health issue.**

# FLUSHING YOUR APPLIANCES AND FAUCETS

Once you've flushed your hot and cold water faucets, be sure to take these additional steps to flush plumbing appliances. To protect the health and safety of our communities, we recommend that you read carefully and follow the steps for flushing. Thank you for your cooperation.

- **Ice makers**

If you have an ice maker in your refrigerator, first throw away all ice and then:

If you have a filter on your ice maker: Some refrigerators, which have ice makers, also have filters on the small water line that feed the ice maker. If you have or use filters on your ice maker, you want to replace the filter AFTER flushing your refrigerator's ice maker. These filters require routine replacement. This would be a good time to replace the filter to ensure that the water line to the ice maker is completely flushed. Some refrigerators also provide filtered cold water. Check to make sure that you have replaced any filter AFTER flushing that is associated with the cold water supply. Then flush cold-water dispenser for five minutes.

- After flushing all of the other plumbing, let the ice maker container fill up completely and discard this ice and clean the container before replacing. If you have more than one refrigerator make sure you perform the same procedure on those units as well.

- **Dishwashers and washing machines**

Dishes and clothes that were washed during the DO NOT USE order should be rewashed. After flushing hot water pipes and water heater, run dishwasher and washing machine empty one time.

- **Humidifiers, CPAP and other devices**

Throw away any water used in humidifiers, Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP), oral, medical or healthcare devices, and rinse the device with clean water.

- **Baby formula, food or drinks made with water during the DO NOT USE**

Be sure you have thrown away any baby formula or other foods prepared with water during the incident. This includes drinks like Gatorade made with powder or concentrate.

- **Water filters**

Clean or change your water filter, or contact the filter manufacturer for more details.

- **Water supplies for pets**

Pets need clean water too. Be sure to empty all water bowls, bottles, or other water supplies for your pet. After flushing your water system, wash the pet bowl, bottle or other water supply. Then refill with tap water.

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*If you have any questions please call the Department of Environmental Quality's Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278*

# FLUSHING YOUR APPLIANCES AND FAUCETS

- **Point of entry/point of use devices**

(this may not apply to all customers)

If you have a Point of Entry water treatment system such as a water softener or filter, which all of the home's water passes through before it enters the main plumbing system, you should consider the following general guidelines before completing your household plumbing flushing.

- **Water Softeners**

Household water softeners, which use a natural or synthetic resin material to exchange sodium for calcium and magnesium present in the water, should be manually regenerated before flushing your plumbing system. This will ensure that the softener resin has been backwashed and cleaned before flushing procedures begin.

If you are unsure of how to manually initiate a regeneration cycle, refer to your softener owner's manual or call you equipment supplier for assistance.

- **Sediment Filters**

Household water filters usually fall in two basic categories:

- Pressure filters, which can be backwashed to clean
- Cartridge filters, which have a replaceable element or cartridge

If your home has a pressure filter that can be backwashed, you should initiate a manual backwash of the filter before proceeding with, and after completing, the flushing procedures.

If you have a whole house cartridge filter system, you should replace the cartridges after completing the flushing procedures.

- **Point of use filters/treatment**

If you have or use Point of Use filters, which are typically attached to your kitchen faucet you should replace the filter before using the faucet-connected unit. These filters require periodic replacement, making this an appropriate time.

- **Reverse Osmosis**

Reverse Osmosis drinking water treatment systems often have pre-filters, which you may want to replace before flushing the RO System. However, the actual Reverse Osmosis membrane module should not require replacement. If the manufacturer of the membrane suggests that you replace this part of the system you should ask them to give you the specific reasons why.

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