



City of Phoenix

Water System Guidance for Building Closures and Reopenings

Phoenix's tap water is safe to drink. Phoenix Water Services will continue to provide safe, clean, reliable water to the community during pandemic conditions.

What are the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for reopening businesses related to water systems?

The focus of this guidance is to provide CDC recommendations to help prevent corrosion in plumbing that may occur when there is a large reduction or a short-term closure in building water use. The information in this guidance document is general in nature and focuses on potable water systems inside large buildings with complex plumbing. Each building is unique and will require different actions based on its plumbing systems, usage patterns, and source of water supply.

More information about cooling towers and HVAC systems can be found [here](#). Additionally, to prevent sewer gas intrusion into the building, per the CDC you will need to ensure the buildings sewage system p-traps do not dry out. You can accomplish this by flushing water down all drains.

Why is it important to follow CDC guidelines?

In order to help slow the spread of COVID-19, many buildings are closed to the public or have limited access. The reduction in building water use increases the risk of water quality issues within the building plumbing system and associated equipment such as cooling towers, pools, decorative fountains, hot tubs, or other equipment. To prevent *bacteria* growth, these issues must be actively managed and maintained.

Building closures and reduced occupancy affect all building environmental systems including 1) potable and non-potable water systems, 2) cooling towers, 3) heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems which are designed to control humidity and mold. These systems must be actively managed and maintained to protect the health of building users. In addition to managing systems during shutdown periods, per the CDC, building owners and operators must implement well thought out start-up protocols to ensure the protection of public health. By implementing procedures now, you can protect the public and minimize the steps needed to safely re-open closed or partially closed facilities.

Steps to reopening, per the CDC.

References:

1. European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease - [Guidance for Managing Legionella During the Coronavirus Pandemic 2020](#).
2. [Recovering from COVID-19 Building Closures](#). AIHA 2020 Guidance Document (Prepared by Indoor Environmental Quality Committee of the American industrial Hygiene Society).
3. [Safe Management of Water Systems in Buildings During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#), 25th March 2020, Legionella Control Association, Staffordshire, UK
4. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine 2019. *Management of Legionella in Water Systems*. Washington, D.C. The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25474>
5. [European Technical Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Investigation, of Infections Caused by Legionella species](#). June 2017
6. Developing a Water Management Program to Reduce *Legionella* Growth and Spread in Buildings: A Practical Guide to Implementing Industry Standards June 5, 2017. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/wmp/toolkit/index.html>
CDC – Coronavirus Disease 2019 - Guidance for Building Water Systems <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>