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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BEFORE OPENING YOUR BUILDINGS: Important Water Quality Message

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – When building occupancy decreases significantly (as it may have throughout the COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Order), the water held within the building’s plumbing system can deteriorate. When water is not used regularly, the chlorine residual levels can decrease, which may result in a lower level of drinking water quality in these buildings.

Fort Collins Utilities continues to ensure water in our main lines is high-quality and safe; however, many customers are not aware that it is their responsibility to flush their water service lines and internal plumbing. Keeping water from getting stagnant is even more critical when buildings have had low or no occupancy.

How Can You Help?

As buildings open back up and employees return to work, you will need to ‘flush’ your facility’s plumbing lines to ensure you are receiving the highest quality water. Building flushing helps decrease risks from bacterial growth and metals that can accumulate when water sits in pipes for extended periods of time.

If you are unable to flush your water lines, we recommend posting a notice on drinking fountains and near faucets in kitchens and bathroom areas that advises employees not to drink the water until the following steps have been taken.

These Steps Will Get the Water Flowing

Fort Collins Utilities recommends the following steps (every building will be different depending on plumbing configuration, building size and number of faucets):

- Begin at one of the farthest sinks from the water main (usually located on the highest floor, farthest from the street).
- Turn on the COLD water faucet and let it run until the water flowing out is consistently cold (see below paragraph for time estimations). Do not attempt to flush by running the hot water.
- Next, run the COLD water from each fixture throughout the building until that water also runs cold.

While flushing times will vary, Utilities estimates approximately 10 minutes for *daily* flushing in buildings with low occupancy and 30-45 minutes *weekly* for unoccupied buildings. *The key is to flush the lines until the water runs cold.*

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Another option is to flush toilets, remembering to begin with those located farthest from the water main (same general location as the faucets referenced above).

What About Ice Machines?

It is also recommended that after the lines in your building are flushed, the ice machine be emptied of remaining ice and not used for a minimum of 24 hours, emptying any ice made throughout that timeframe.

Continued Protection

Fort Collins Utilities' Water Quality Laboratory staff continues to collect weekly samples at sites throughout the distribution system to ensure our water meets all standards for safe, high-quality drinking water. Following the steps above will help ensure you are getting the highest possible water quality during this time when buildings have low or no occupancy, and employees return to work.

If you have questions about building flushing practices or your water quality in general, please email UtilitiesCustomerAccounts@fcgov.com or call 970-416-4268. Learn more about water quality at fcgov.com/water-quality.

Additional Resource

Center of Disease Control (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html>