

# HOW TO FLUSH AN ENTIRE HOUSE PLUMBING SYSTEM

These instructions will help by providing some step-by-step instructions on how to do a complete flush of the plumbing system in your home.

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

## 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 sink fixtures, hot water bathtub or shower fixtures. Next, open all other hot water fixtures, such as in kitchens, wet bars, etc. Run all of these hot water fixtures for 15 minutes, then shut the water off. After you have flushed each hot water faucet for 15 minutes, your water heater will be safe for use.

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

### 3. Flush ALL remaining cold water taps for 5 minutes

Before starting step 3, please see **FLUSHING YOUR APPLIANCES** for more information. Once the hot water tank and hot water piping have been flushed, open ALL of the cold water fixtures, and flush each toilet at least one time. Run these cold water fixtures for 5 minutes then shut the water off. 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
- Baby formula
- Water filters
- Water softeners
- Oral, medical or health care devices
- 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.**

*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

**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.**

- **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: 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 the cold-water dispenser for five minutes.

After flushing all the other plumbing, let the ice maker container fill up completely, then 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**

After flushing hot water pipes and water heater as noted in Step 1, run your dishwasher and washing machine through one hot cycle and then one cold cycle while empty.

- **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.

- **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, and the do not drink order has been lifted, wash the pet bowl, bottle, or other water supply. Then refill with tap water.

- **Point of Entry/Point of Use devices**

If you have a Point of Entry water treatment system such as a water softener or filter, which all 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 again 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.

- **Reverse Osmosis**

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