



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Stagnant Water a Concern for ~~Commercial~~ Building Closures

Contact: Assistant Public Works Director David Brown – 575-6204

Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142

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Stagnant Water a Concern for ~~Commercial~~ Building Closures

Extensive COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and required closures have resulted in many commercial buildings (offices, hotels, medical facilities, etc.) with little or no water use.

Stagnant water in these buildings can cause conditions that increase the risk for growth and spread of Legionella (Legionnaire's disease), lead to low or undetectable levels of the disinfectant chlorine, and create unsafe levels of lead and copper.

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 domestic or commercial purposes.

Some buildings may be re-opening with Yakima County now in Phase 1.5 of Gov. Jay Inslee's Safe Start plan.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends building owners and managers take proactive steps to protect public health. The steps include minimizing water stagnation during closures and taking action to address building water quality prior to reopening.

Before flushing buildings, the EPA recommends:

- Contact your water utility about local water quality and to coordinate maintenance activities.
- Check information from the Yakima Health District for any local requirements for reopening.
- Follow appropriate regulations and policies for worker safety and health.

For more information contact Assistant Public Works Director David Brown at 575-6204.

See <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/information-maintaining-or-restoring-water-quality-buildings-low-or-no-use> for more from the EPA about re-opening buildings.

Click <https://www.yakimacounty.us/2264/Health-District> for more about the Yakima Health District.

Click <https://www.yakimawa.gov/media/covid19/> for more about the City of Yakima's response to the pandemic.