

**WEST ANDERSON WATER DISTRICT
504 HIGHWAY 187 SOUTH
ANDERSON, SC 29626
(864) 225-5741**

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Important Water Safety Tips for Reopening Businesses or Churches

Along with the rest of the country, West Anderson Water District (WAWD) has been closely monitoring the recent developments surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. As Covid-19 related restrictions on public gatherings and re-openings are lifted in South Carolina, WAWD would like to provide the following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) because safely restarting water use in an unused or underused building requires several preventative steps.

The COVID-19 virus has not been detected in our drinking water because current water treatment methods remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. Businesses and churches still need to make sure their building's water system is safe to use. Stagnant or standing water in unused or underused buildings can increase the risk for growth and spread of *Legionella* and other biofilm-associated bacteria. Stagnant water can also lead to low or undetectable levels of disinfectants, such as chlorine. **If you have buildings that have been sitting idle for an extended period with little or no water use, water in the building lines and piping can become stagnant and needs to be flushed from the lines.**

For most businesses and churches, some common steps can be taken to return their buildings to service. When a business/church/fellowship hall is being returned to service, someone should ensure that the system is working properly, leaks are minimized, wastewater piping is intact, and most importantly the building's plumbing is flushed. **A thorough flushing process is necessary to ensure that all the water inside the building piping is filled with fresh water.**

The CDC has a comprehensive, dedicated page that outlines the eight steps for a business to take before a business or building should reopen. The complete list can be found here:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html.

If a business's or church's staff is NOT knowledgeable about how the plumbing in buildings works or about flushing methods, consider contacting a plumber for help. Water and delivery systems beyond the water meter are the responsibility of the owner, including all piping and equipment inside structures that use water.

At WAWD, your safety is our primary concern, so if you have any questions or concerns with regard to this matter, please give us a call and we will be glad to help.