

Procedure for Flushing a Domestic Water System after a Do Not Use Water Advisory

All water systems that have been shut down should be flushed as there will be stagnant water in the lines.

After completing the flushing procedure outlined below, if you smell fuel in your water or if there is a sheen on your water, please call Interior Health at 250-420-2220 to speak to an Environmental Health Officer.

- If in doubt, seek the services of a trained professional such as a plumber. In most cases, instructions for flushing various appliances can be found in the owner's manuals provided with water softeners and other equipment. It is recommended that these instructions should be followed.
- For homes on septic systems, ensure that your septic system will be able to handle large volumes of water before you begin flushing. Consideration may be given to running inside taps with a hose to outside or to using buckets to prevent overloading the septic systems.

General Water System Flushing Procedure:

1. Flush the water line to the house. This should be accomplished by running outside taps to waste for five minutes. Once the main line etc. is flushed, then the house plumbing system can be flushed. This will reduce loading on septic systems.
2. Flush household pipes/faucets. To flush your plumbing, run your cold water faucets on full for at least five minutes each. If your service connection (distance from intake to house) is long or complex, consider flushing for a longer period. Remove all aerators (screens on end of taps) to ensure there is enough flow through taps.
3. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for flushing the hot water tank. Shut off the breaker at the electrical panel and wait at least two hours before flushing the hot water tank to allow the water to cool. (For gas or propane hot water tanks, please follow the manufacturer's instructions for turning off the element and pilot light.) Run the hot water taps until the warm water runs out and cold water is coming from the hot taps. Once all of the water has been flushed from the hot water taps, turn off all of the taps and turn the breaker back on to the hot water tank.
4. For other appliances such as in-line filters, treatment systems, water softeners, fridge water dispensers with direct water connections or water tanks: Run enough water to completely replace at least one full volume of all lines and tanks. If your filters are near the end of their lives, replace them.
 - Water softeners: Run through a regeneration cycle.
 - Reverse Osmosis (RO) units: Replace pre-filters, check owner's manual.
 - Replace other water filters, as they are disposable and may be contaminated. This applies especially to carbon filters.
5. Other appliances such as coffee makers, Brita filters, or bathroom Water Piks that are not directly connected to a water line but may have been used during the event should also be thoroughly cleaned and flushed.

Revised August 2013

Resources:

Sun Country Health Region – Procedure for Flushing Water Systems AFTER a Precautionary Drinking Water Advisory

New Hampshire Public Health Services – Emergency Action Plan Contaminated Water Supply

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/fp/documents/cont-water.pdf>