



MEMORANDUM

TO: Public and Private Schools in Maryland
Local Boards of Education

FROM: *SK* Saeid Kasraei, Administrator
Water Supply Program

DATE: August 19, 2020

RE: IMPORTANT REMINDER: Preventing Water Quality Problems

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As the 2020 – 2021 school year is approaching, due to COVID-19, many schools are faced with the decision of whether to hold classes virtually, reopen the school, or a combination of both. If your school building is going to be fully or partially operational, we want to make sure that you are aware of some simple measures that can improve the quality of the drinking water at your school prior to the opening day.

For most schools in Maryland, the buildings have been closed since March 2020 in response to COVID-19, and, as a result, the water has remained stagnant in the plumbing throughout the spring and summer months, which may increase the risk of bacterial growth, including coliform bacteria and Legionella, in the plumbing. Furthermore, when the stagnant water is in contact with plumbing (e.g., pipes, fixtures, etc.) for extended periods of time, elevated concentrations of metals, including lead and copper, may develop.

As a preventive measure, MDE's Water Supply Program strongly recommends that the entire school's water distribution system be flushed prior to the beginning of the academic year. The recommended flushing (see links provided in the attachment) will help to remove the stagnant water which may contain elevated levels of bacteria, metals, disinfection by-products, and other contaminants that may have developed as a result of low or no use of water. These actions may help prevent water quality problems that potentially occur due to an inactive plumbing system at a school over the summer and/or during periods of low or no occupancy. We have attached several links to available sources of information for building flushing and other related information. The link to MDE's website may be found [HERE](#).

Please feel free to reach us by email at water.supply@maryland.gov if you have any questions regarding this reminder.

cc: County Environmental Health Director

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