

# HEALTHY BUILDINGS REOPENING CHECKLIST

The temporary shutdown or reduced operation of a building can create hazards for occupants. The Utah Department of Environmental Quality and the Utah Department of Health recommend the following actions be taken prior to reopening a building. These recommendations are especially important for school buildings, child care facilities, and universities.

## Task #1 - Complete Unidirectional Flushing

**Why It Matters** - Flushing the plumbing system helps remove bacteria and metals (such as lead) that may have accumulated in water sitting in pipes for an extended period of time. Bacteria-contaminated water can make people extremely ill, and lead exposure has serious negative health effects and can slow down children's brain development.

**Instructions** - Flush all of the taps starting with the cold water tap and then the hot water tap for at least 10 minutes. Each drinking water outlet should be flushed individually; flushing a toilet will not flush your water fountains. Clean and disinfect shower heads and other piping as needed. The sequence of flushing is important. Implement unidirectional flushing to ensure clean water moves throughout the entire plumbing system. Visit [EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov) for more detailed instructions.

## Task #2 - Check Water Heater Temperatures

**Why It Matters** - Stagnant or standing water in a plumbing system can increase the risk for growth and spread of *Legionella* and other bacteria. When water is stagnant, hot water temperatures can decrease to the *Legionella* growth range (77–108°F).

**Instructions** - Make sure water heaters are set to at least 140°F. Higher temperatures can further reduce the risk of *Legionella* growth, but take measures to prevent scalding. Determine if your manufacturer recommends draining the water heater after a prolonged period of disuse. Ensure all maintenance activities are carried out according to the manufacturer's instructions or by professionals. For more information, please visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

## Task #3 - Test Drinking Water

**Why It Matters** - Testing your water can confirm whether the plumbing system was adequately flushed and the drinking water is safe.

**Instructions** - Have your water tested for bacteria, lead and copper. Many [laboratories](#) throughout the state can run these analyses. We recommend testing for bacteria from faucets throughout the building, especially at plumbing “dead-ends.” We also recommend testing for lead and copper at any tap used for drinking or preparing food or baby formula. Lead and copper samples should be collected at least six hours after the flushing is completed, but before the faucet is used that day. The Utah Department of Environmental Quality has grant funding available that can pay for testing lead samples from schools and child care facilities. To learn more visit [leadfree.utah.gov](http://leadfree.utah.gov).

## Task #4 - “Flush Out” HVAC System

**Why It Matters** - Mold and other indoor air quality issues may result from the building’s closure, especially if humidity control and ventilation were inadequate. Both can have negative health impacts, especially for certain vulnerable groups such as those with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

**Instructions** - Do a thorough building inspection to find any mold and any water source that may be contributing to the mold. After an assessment confirms mold and moisture are not detected or after remediation has been completed, operate your building’s HVAC system for at least 48 to 72 hours (known as a “flush out” period) before occupants return. This “flush out” helps reduce moisture that may cause mold and improve indoor air quality. For more information visit [CDC.gov](http://CDC.gov).

### Other Recommendations:

- Clean or replace point-of-use filters on sinks and drinking fountains.
- Clean out all aerators and ice machines.
- Maintain sprinkler systems, eyewash stations, and safety showers.