Caledonia Township
Public Water Source Changeover
Common Questions & Answers

General Information

1. Why is Caledonia Township changing its water source from groundwater to Grand Rapids water?

   While Caledonia Township drinking water is safe, the water from Caledonia wells is hard, requiring salt causing customers to need to change out appliances more frequently.

   The Township Board of Trustees decided to move forward with a connection to Grand Rapids rather than expanding and updating its current well fields and treatment facilities.

2. When and where will the water changeover take place?

   The Township expects the pump station construction to be completed in the 4th quarter of 2025/1st quarter of 2026, then the northern water users will change over. The Southern water user will switch upon completion of the Kraft Trunkline tentatively scheduled for 2027/2028.

3. Why do we have two separate systems? Why isn't the Kraft Trunkline constructed yet?

   The water system needs another pipe to convey water from the Grand Rapids pump station to the south end of the Township. The Kraft Trunkline project will provide that extra pipe.

   The Township is hoping to receive federal funding for the Kraft Trunkline, but the timing for the funding is unclear. We are anticipating 2027 or 2028 construction.

4. Will my water service be interrupted during the transition?

   Water Service will remain uninterrupted during the transition. Residents may notice some sedimentation during the initial changeover which should be temporary.

5. Where does Grand Rapids get its water supply from?

   Grand Rapids gets its water supply directly from Lake Michigan, a surface water source.

6. How does Grand Rapids Water get to Caledonia?

   The pump station pumps from a watermain on 60th Street that is part of Grand Rapids water system in Cascade Township.

7. How is Lake Michigan water treated before it reaches our homes?

   Grand Rapids water is treated at the Lake Michigan Water Treatment Plant on the shores of Lake Michigan in Grand Haven Township. It undergoes screening and chemical treatments.

8. How does Grand Rapids water get to Caledonia?

   The pump station pumps from a watermain on 60th Street that is part of Grand Rapids water system in Cascade Township.

9. Will I be required to connect? If I am on a well currently, can I connect? How expensive is a connection.

   Residents and businesses not currently on the public water system will not be required by Caledonia Township to connect. If a resident is currently on a well, and would like to connect, and there is watermain in the road in front of your home, you will be able to connect for a $4000 connection fee plus the cost of a contractor to run the water service into your home. If you're not sure if a water connection is available, Caledonia Township staff can assist you.

10. Will everyone in Caledonia Township receive the new water supply?

    No, the switch to the City of Grand Rapids will only have an impact on those that are CURRENTLY connected to Township water. If you have a well, you will continue to remain on that water source.

11. If watermain is not currently available to my home but I would like it to be, who do I talk with?

    Township staff can assist you in evaluating the potential for connecting to public water.

Water Quality & Safety

12. Is the new water safe to drink?

    The new water is safe to drink and is tested frequently to ensure quality and safety.

13. Will the taste, smell, or appearance of my water change?

    It is likely that you will find that the taste, smell, and appearance of the water will change for the better.

14. How does Grand Rapids ensure water safety compared to our current groundwater system?

Both water systems are safe. They are required to follow state of Michigan and federal safe drinking water standards. When the changeover occurs testing will be more frequent because of the newness of the system/water source.

15. Will the new water have fluoride in it?

    Grand Rapids Water was the first city in the world to put fluoride in its drinking water starting in 1945. This has led to a significant reduction in cavities and decay amongst children. Fluoride in public drinking water is considered safe to consume. Caledonia's current water supply is also supplemented with Fluoride.

16. Does the new water contain more chlorine or other treatment chemicals and why?

    Grand Rapids water contains chlorine as well as phosphate, the same as Caledonia's water. Chlorine keeps the water safe from microbes, while phosphate is used to reduce the risk of corrosion in the water system and in plumbing. The concentration of chlorine and phosphate are approximately the same, but some may find the presence of chlorine to be more prominent in Grand Rapids water.

Health & Household Concerns

17. Will the new water affect my household plumbing, appliances, or water softener?

    Residents on the Grand Rapids water system typically do not soften their water but customers will need to decide what they prefer.

18. Is the hardness of Lake Michigan water different from our current groundwater?

    Grand Rapids water is 8-10 Grains and Caledonia water is between 22-30 Grains. The North Well Field, which will be put out of service, was the source of the hard water. Because Grand Rapids water isn't as hard, it will use less salt if you continue to use a softener.

19. Do I still need a water softener after the switch?

    Residents can continue to soften water, but it will likely not be needed with the new water sources, and they will use less salt. If you continue to use a softener, the softener should be adjusted to the new level of hardness.

20. Will the change in water chemistry affect people with sensitive health conditions (e.g., kidney issues, dialysis patients)?

    The change in water chemistry should not result in a negative impact for people with sensitive health conditions, it may be important to be aware of the change in water in some circumstances to refine treatment. We recommend that a professional be consulted if you have concerns.

21. Is the water safe for pets, aquariums, and plants?

    Grand Rapids water is safe for pets, aquariums, and plants. Like Caledonia water, the removal of chlorine is recommended in some circumstances.

22. If I want to get rid of my water softener, what should I do?

    Hire a plumber to have it removed. Or if a bypass was installed, you can shut off the softener.

Billing & Costs

23. Will my water bill change because of the switch?

    Switching to Grand Rapids will increase the cost of water by approximately 60% and the overall bill will increase by approximately 30% for customers who are served with Grand Rapids. Those who will continue with the Township South Water Plant supply will have a 5% increase in their water rate.

24. When will my water bill change?

    New water rates will be effective starting in January 2026 regardless of the exact date of service of Grand Rapids. The first bill that includes the higher rate will be received in early April for the first quarter (January through March).

25. Who is responsible for billing now—Caledonia Township or the City of Grand Rapids?

    You will continue to receive bills from Caledonia Township.

26. Will there be additional fees for the new system?

    While the cost of the overall bill will increase, there will be no additional fees added.

27. How will the increase to my water bill impact future bills when irrigating?

    With an increase in water rates, Seasonal Usage will be more important than ever to continue to keep your bills at a reasonable rate during those hot, dry, summer months when irrigation is at its peak.

Maintenance & Operations

28. What will happen to the old groundwater wells?

    Caledonia is considering whether the wells can be utilized by another entity. If they are not, they will be plugged according to EGLE requirements.

29. Who will manage and maintain the new water system?

    Grand Rapids will manage and maintain the new pump station, but Caledonia's water system will continue to be maintained by Caledonia Township and their operator, Infrastructure Alternatives.

30. Who do I contact if I have concerns about water quality or service issues?

    Caledonia Township or Kent County Health Department

Community Impact

31. Does switching to Lake Michigan water help ensure long-term supply for Caledonia Township?

    Switching to Lake Michigan water was precipitated by trends showing that our current system was not keeping up with water demands for fire suppression at its current growth and water use trends.

32. How does this change affect water pressure?

    Your water pressure will not change.

33. Is this change beneficial for sustainability and future growth in the township?

    New facilities and the distribution system are planned and constructed to facilitate future growth.

EGLE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

FLUSHING YOUR HOUSE PLUMBING SYSTEM WHEN WATER SERVICES ARE RESTORED

Guidance

When water service is turned back on, it is important to flush the plumbing in your home. Moving fresh water through your pipes flushes bacteria and metals from your plumbing. These instructions provide step-by-step instructions on how to completely flush your home plumbing. If you have difficulty following these steps, contact a licensed plumber for assistance.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Complete these steps in the order below. Finish each step completely before moving to the next step.

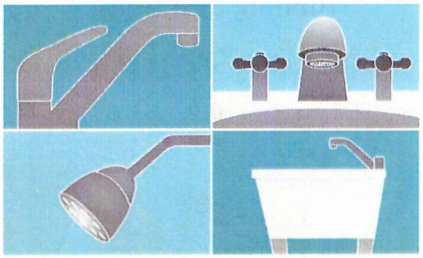
Before starting the steps below:

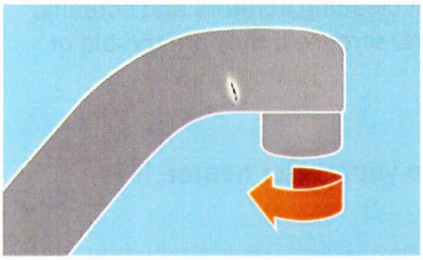
- Turn off the supply valve to your water heater, if possible.
- Bypass water softeners and/or whole house filters if you have them.

Discoloration may occur during flushing. This is expected.

1. Locate the faucets to be flushed and make sure the drains are open.

- Don't forget faucets in the basement or other floors of your house.
- Remove or bypass all fixture filters. You should not flush through a filter.



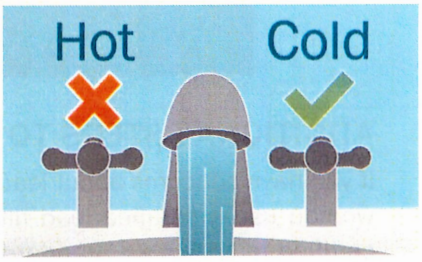


2. Remove aerators and screens from faucets and shower heads.

Unscrew the aerators as shown. See guidance below about removing and cleaning your aerators.

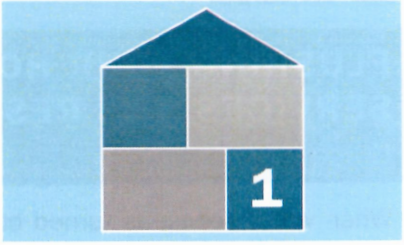
3. Open all cold water taps. Leave all faucets running during this process.

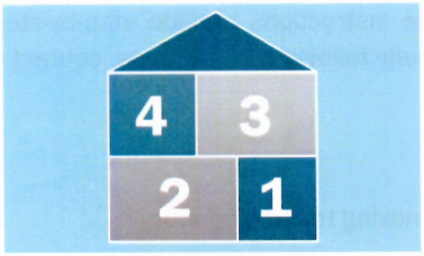
- First open faucets in the basement or lowest floor in the house.
- Then open faucets on the next highest floor of the house.
- Continue until all faucets are open on all floors, including tubs and showers (remove shower head if possible).



4. Leave ALL faucets running for at least 30 minutes.

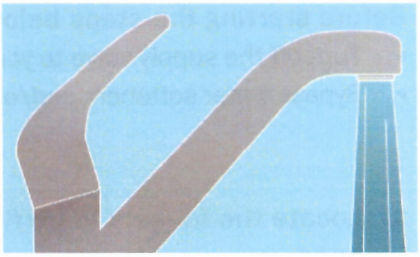
5. Turn off the 1st faucet you turned on (basement or lowest floor).

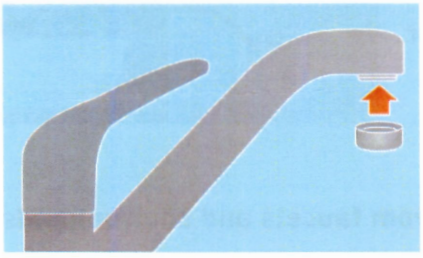




6. Turn off all other faucets in the same order you turned them on.

7. Turn on each kitchen or bathroom tap, one at a time, and run each for 10 minutes or more. Make sure only one tap is running at a time.





8. Clean and re-install aerators and screens on each faucet and shower head.
   - See pages below for guidance on cleaning aerators and screens.
   - You may need to replace aerators/screens if they are too old or worn.

After completing these steps, remember to re-open the supply valve to your water heater. It is recommended that water heaters be flushed at this time.

DO NOT use hot water for drinking, cooking or preparing baby formula.

ADDITIONAL STEPS TO REDUCE POTENTIAL LEAD EXPOSURE

If you have concerns about lead exposure, public health recommends that any household with a child or pregnant woman use a certified lead filter to reduce lead from their drinking water. Look for filters that are tested and certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for lead reduction. If your household has a child or pregnant woman and are not able to afford the cost of a lead filter, please contact your local municipal water system.

If you wish to get your drinking water tested, use a certified laboratory. To find a certified lab, go to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's web page at www.Michigan.gov/EGLE and search "Certified Lab List." For additional information on minimizing lead exposure, visit www.Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe.

EGLE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

FLUSHING YOUR APPLIANCES WHEN WATER SERVICE IS RESTORED

GUIDANCE

When water services are restored after having been shut off for a period of time, it is necessary to flush the plumbing components in your home. Guidance on flushing your whole house plumbing is described in the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE's) document, *"Flushing Your House Plumbing System When Water Services Are Restored"* located at Michigan.gov/DrinkingWater.

In addition to flushing your house plumbing system, you should also flush all appliances that use water for consumption. This guidance document is to help homeowners understand how to flush those appliances.

FLUSHING APPLIANCES THAT USE WATER FOR CONSUMPTION

Refrigerators with Ice Makers and/or Water Dispensers

AFTER flushing your home's plumbing, replace all filters associated with the refrigerator. Then flush the cold-water dispenser for five minutes. This can be done by filling and dumping a cup repeatedly.

Let the ice maker container fill up completely. Then, discard the ice and clean the container before replacing it. If you have more than one refrigerator, make sure you perform the same procedure on those units as well.

Stand-alone Ice Makers

AFTER flushing your home's plumbing, replace any filters associated with the ice maker's water line. These filters require routine replacement. This would be a good time to replace the filter and ensure that the water line is completely flushed. Let the ice maker's container fill up completely. Then, discard the first batch of ice and clean the container or compartment.

Water Softeners

During the initial flushing of the house, it is recommended that you bypass any water softeners prior to flushing. Once flushing is completed, the softener should be forced to do a regeneration cycle before being put into service. If you are unsure of how to manually initiate a regeneration cycle, refer to your softener's owner manual or call your equipment supplier for assistance.

Humidifiers, CPAP and other devices

Throw away any water used in humidifiers, Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP), oral, medical or healthcare devices, and rinse the device with clean water.

Cleaning Your Aerators

What are aerators and when should they be cleaned?

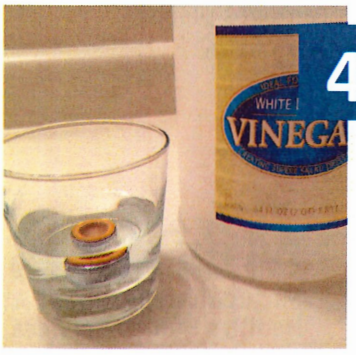
There are screens on faucets called aerators. Aerators help keep pieces of lead and other particles from getting into your water. Clean your drinking water faucet aerator at least every six months. If there is construction or repairs to the public water system or pipes near your home, clean your drinking water faucet aerator every month until the work is done.

Follow the steps below to clean your aerators:

- The small round piece on the bottom of your faucet is the aerator (pronounced: air-raytor).
- Unscrew the aerator from the bottom of the faucet.
- You should be able to unscrew it with your fingers, but you might need a wrench if it's stuck.

- Your aerator might not look the same as this, but it's okay.
- Now that the aerator is off, let's clean it.

- While you only need to use water to rinse off your aerator, these things might make it easier to clean it:
  - An old toothbrush
  - A glass of vinegar



- Soaking the aerator in vinegar will loosen some of the grime. You can soak it as long as you want, but even five minutes will help.
- The toothbrush makes it easy to scrub the inside. Don't use that toothbrush for brushing your teeth again.

- If your aerator looks like Photo A, it has a flow control piece. You'll have to take it apart:
  - Pull out the pieces carefully.
  - Note the order that the pieces come out. You'll have to put them back in the same way. It may help to take a picture or write down some notes.
- If your aerator looks like Photo B, go to Step 6.

- You might not have all of these pieces. They might not be this color. Every aerator is a little different.
- Scrub all of the pieces. Make sure you get down inside the metal piece, removing any bits of grime or metal flakes you see.

- Rinse everything very well.
- Run water through the aerator screen - holding it right side up and upside down.

- Once it's clean,
  - If your aerator looks like Photo A in step 5, put it back together.
  - If it looks like Photo B, you're all set.

- Put the aerator back on your faucet.
- Repeat these steps at least every six months. Cleaning removes pieces of lead or other particles from your aerator and stops them from getting into your water.

For more information call the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) at 800-648-6942 or visit Michigan.gov/mileadsafe.

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services