

NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

August 2016

TESTING FOR LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Lead in drinking water is a hot topic nationwide. Schools are particularly at risk because many water systems are comprised of lead pipes and old lead-lined water coolers. Districts can help protect students and staff by testing water regularly. These tips from the EPA will help you determine what, how and when to test your drinking water.

Where to Sample

High Priority

- Drinking fountains (both bubbler and water cooler style)
- Kitchen sinks
- Classroom combination sink/fountains
- Home economic room sinks
- Teacher's lounge sink
- Nurse's office sink
- Sinks in Special Education classrooms
- Any sink known visibly used for consumption (i.e., coffee maker or cups are nearby)



Medium Priority

- Classroom sinks
- Bathroom faucets

Low Priority

- Utility sinks and hose attachments
- Hot water outlets

Before You Sample

- Is your school on a public water system (PWS)? If so, obtain a copy of the most current lead test.
- Check for recalled water coolers.
- Develop a sampling plan and create a coding system.
- Communicate your plan.

How to Sample

- Determine which outlets will be sampled. Determine priorities and code outlets appropriately.
- Deactivate outlets overnight before testing.
- Take a "first draw" sample at each outlet.
- If lead is suspected throughout the system, take a 30 second "flush" sample from outlet.
- Send samples to laboratory which is certified to test lead in drinking water.

Sample Results

The EPA's recommended action level for lead in drinking water is 20 parts per billion (ppb). **If your water sample shows a ppb of 20 or higher, take action.**

How do We Fix the Problem?

If you suspect that concerning levels of lead in your water, consider using routine practices and short-term measures while waiting for test results. Then permanent solutions can be made.

Routine Practices

- Clean debris from accessible screens (aerators) frequently. Clean and inspect periodically.
- Thoroughly flush holding tanks to remove sediment.
- Use only cold water for food and beverage preparation in kitchens and cooking classes.
- Placard bathroom sinks with notices that water should not be consumed. Use pictures for small children to understand.

Short-term Measures

- Flush the pipes: let the water run to bring in fresh water that has not been standing in pipes. Do this overnight or over a weekend.
- Provide bottled water.

Permanent Remedies

- Install corrosion control devices for individual buildings, known as point-of-entry devices.
- Install point-of-use devices that control lead at the tap.
- Find alternate grounding for electrical wires that are grounded to water pipes.
- Replace lead service line and other lead pipes
- Replace outlets where there is localized contamination with new, certified components.


For in-depth details from the EPA on regulations, how to conduct samples, guidance and other tools, go to <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-drinking-water-schools-and-child-care-facilities>

Source: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/testing-schools-and-child-care-centers-lead-drinking-water>

Contact Us

(707) 428-1830
www.nbsia.org

Suzanne Dillman
Jeremy Hatch
Matt Boughtin
Amanda Hawkins


SuzanneD@nbsia.org
JeremyH@nbsia.org
MattB@nbsia.org
AmandaH@nbsia.org

Keep a copy of this bulletin in your Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) binder and be sure employees receive a copy.