Lead Testing in School Drinking Water

EPA Notifications for Lead Residential Level Exceedances Action

EPA requires water systems to test for lead at the tap in certain homes and compare the sample results to EPA's action level of 0.015 mg/L (15 ppb). If more than 10 percent of the samples from these homes have lead concentrations that are greater than the action level, then the system must notify the people they serve and perform follow-up actions.
EPA is required by the Safe Drinking Water Act to provide information to the public in cases when the water system and state, territory, or Tribe have not provided the notice to the people they serve. EPA's notice includes important information to protect public health, including potential health effects and what actions people can take to reduce their exposure.

EPA regulations for safe drinking water in schools

Revisions to Public Health Law (PHL) §1110, which governs school potable water testing and standards, went into effect December 22, 2022. The key revisions to the law which will require changes to Subpart 67-4 include:

- The revised action level of lead in drinking water is 5 parts per billion (ppb), reduced from 15 ppb.
- School buildings deemed "lead-free" are no longer exempt from testing requirements.
- Should it be necessary to provide water to school occupants following an outlet being taken out of service due to an action level exceedance, it must be provided free of charge.
- Copies of lead sampling results including laboratory reports and any lead remediation plans must be made available to the public and posted on the school's website.
- Compliance testing will occur on a triennial (every 3 years) schedule.

EPA safe drinking water act Section 67-4.3 – Monitoring - Effective Date 04/03/2024

Section 67-4.3 Monitoring.

(a) All schools shall test potable water for lead contamination as required in this Subpart.

(b) First-draw samples shall be collected from all outlets, as defined in this Subpart. A first-draw sample volume shall be 250 milliliters (mL), collected from a cold water outlet before any water is used. The water shall be motionless in the pipes for a minimum of 8 hours, but not more than 18 hours, before sample collection. First-draw samples shall be collected pursuant to such other specifications as the Department may determine appropriate.

(c) Monitoring. Schools shall collect first-draw samples in accordance with subdivision

(b) of this section by December 21, 2025 or at an earlier time as determined by the commissioner. Schools shall continue to collect first-draw samples at least every three years thereafter or at an earlier time as determined by the commissioner. All such sampling shall be conducted according to procedures as determined by the commissioner. For buildings put into service after December 22, 2022, initial first-draw samples shall be performed in accordance with subdivision

(b) of this section prior to occupancy.

(d) All first-draw samples shall be analyzed by a laboratory approved to perform such analyses by the Department's Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP).

If the lead concentration of water at an outlet exceeds the action level, the school shall:
(a) prohibit use of the outlet until:

(1) a lead remediation plan is implemented to mitigate the lead level of such outlet; and

(2) test results indicate that the lead levels are at or below the action level;

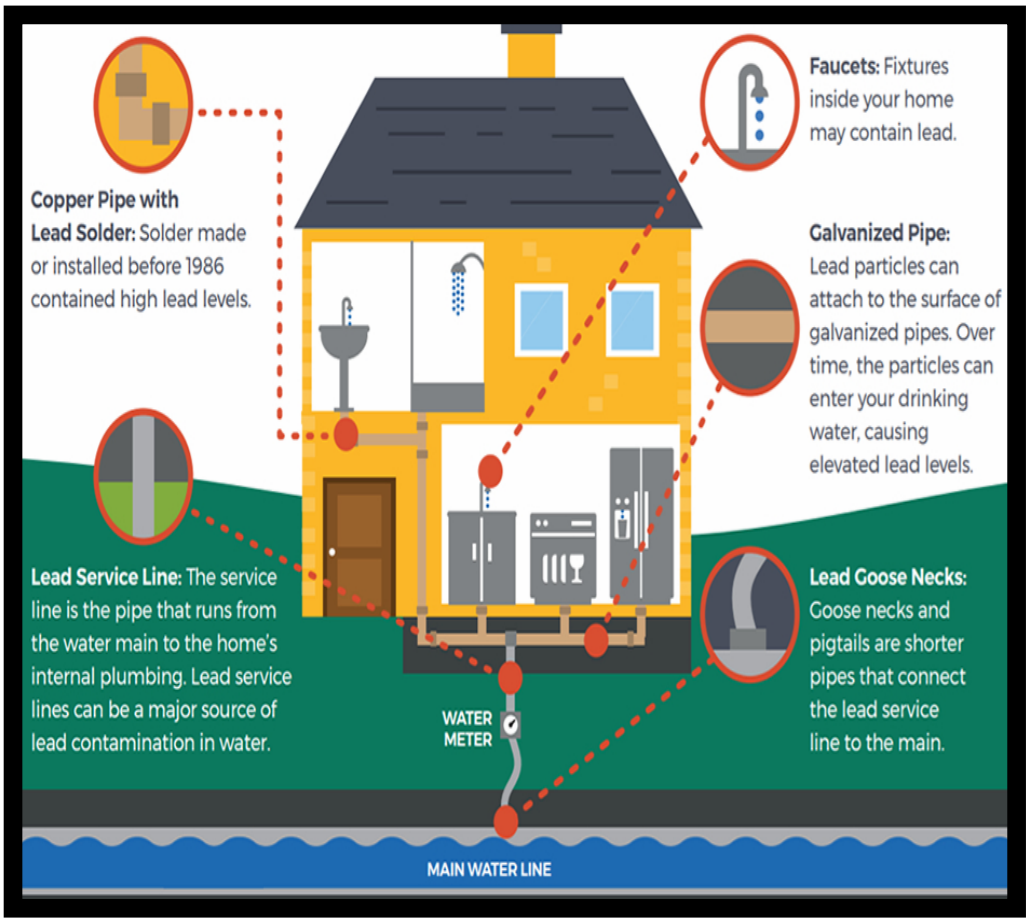
(b) provide building occupants with an adequate supply of free potable water for drinking and cooking until remediation is performed;

(c) report the test results to the local health department as soon as practicable, but no more than 1 business day after the school received the laboratory report; and

(d) notify all staff and all persons in parental relation to children or students of the test results, in writing, as soon as practicable but no more than 10 business days after the school received the laboratory report.

How can lead enter my drinking water?

In some cases, lead can enter drinking water through buried pipes that come into your home. These pipes are called "lead service lines." Service lines are the sections of pipe used to connect a home to the main water line. Lead can leach from these pipes into tap water. In homes served by a lead service line, the service line is the most significant source of lead in drinking water. This guide helps you determine if you have a lead service line and provides additional resources on how to reduce your risk of lead exposure.



Lead can also be found in other plumbing materials and faucets. Water that has high acidity or low mineral content can corrode pipes and faucets, causing lead to leach into your drinking water. This happens more readily with hot water.

The steps Auburn has implemented to remediate lead from the drinking water are as follows:

1. Notification to all parents and staff.

2. All affected outlets are marked as non-potable and will only be use for handwashing.

3. Any drinking fountains and other affected kitchen outlets are being taken out of service until remediation can take place. Water will be accessible to students and staff following SED guidelines as required.

4. Where filtration is needed and it will be installed.

5. We will plan for a future decrease in acceptable levels. This will be done with preventative maintenance and testing.

6. Remediation will be an ever-evolving process with filtration, pipe and water fountain replacement. This will not be a cure all although it will keep us headed in the right direction for reducing potential lead concentration in areas throughout the district. This will help keep us ahead of standards to come while providing a heathier environment for the students and staff.

Where does your water come from?

If you rent or own in a housing complex, you can ask your landlord/property manager for information on your water supply.

1. If your water comes from municipal water supply

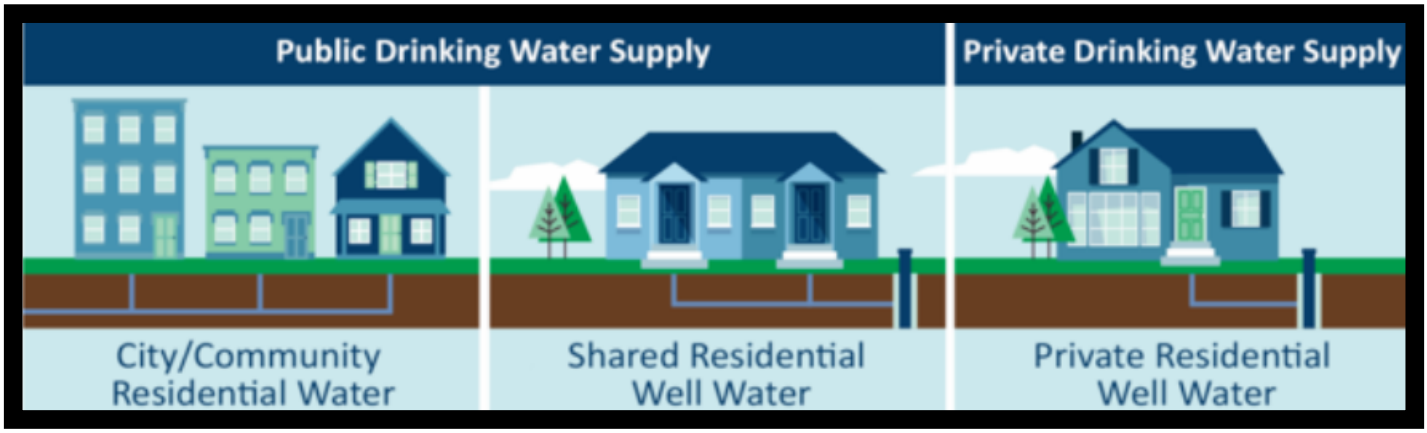
Your first step is to call your water supplier and ask: Does the water utility know the locations of lead service lines in our town and is one connecting my home to the water main?

2. If you live in a Rental Property

You can call your landlord and ask about where your water comes from. If it comes from a municipal water supplier, ask your landlord for its name.

3. If you have a private well

Over 42 million people in the U.S. rely on private water wells for drinking water. The EPA does not regulate private drinking water wells. Many states and towns do not require sampling of private wells after installation. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain the safety of their water. You could still have lead pipes (exterior and interior), lead solder that joins pipes, or faucets that may contain lead.



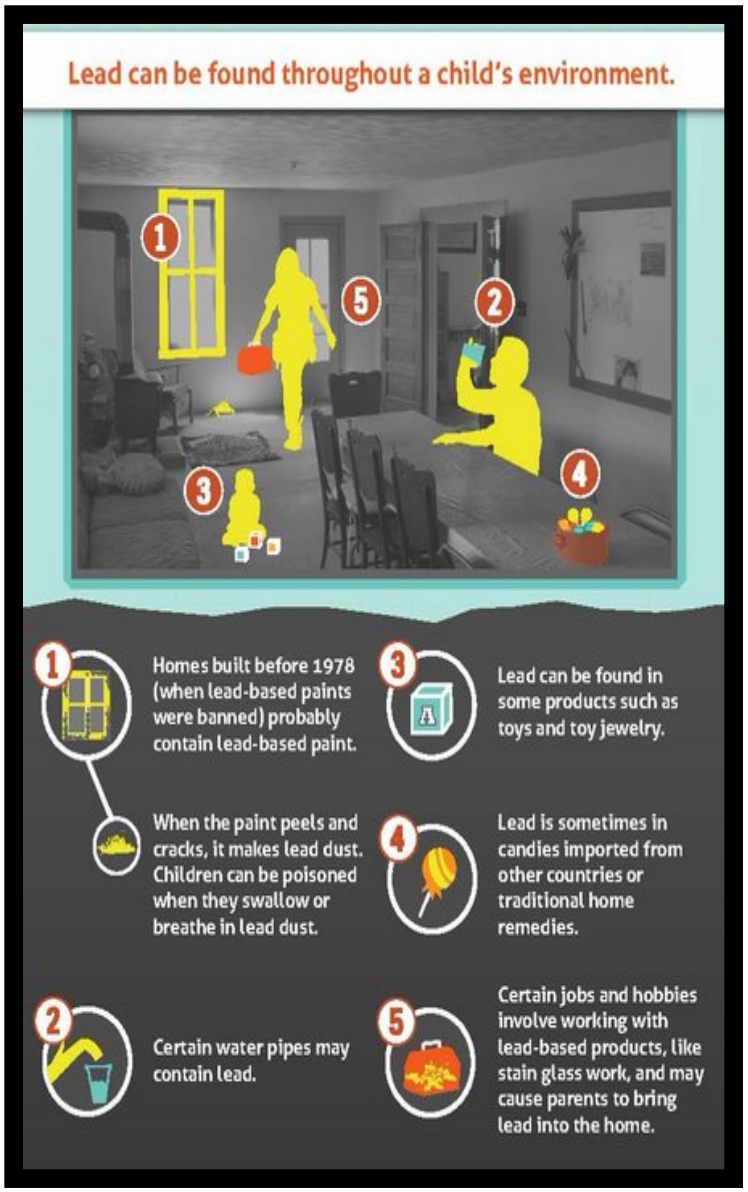
Other Sources of Lead Exposure

Lead can be found throughout a child's environment. Homes built before 1978 (when lead-based paints were banned) probably contain lead-based paint. When the paint peels and cracks, it makes lead dust. Children can be exposed to lead when they swallow or breathe in lead dust.

Lead can also be found in:

- Certain water pipes
- Some products such as toys and jewelry
- Candies or traditional home remedies
- Jobs and hobbies

Certain jobs and hobbies involve working with lead-based products, like stain glass work. This may cause parents to bring lead into the home.



Airports

Children who live near airports may be exposed to lead in air and soil from aviation gas used in piston engine aircrafts.

Lead in food

Lead has been found in some candies. Certain candy ingredients such as chili powder and tamarind may be a source of lead exposure. Lead can get into the candy when drying, storing, and grinding the ingredients are done improperly. Ink from plastic or paper candy wrappers may also contain lead that leaches or seeps into the imported candy.

Lead has also been found in certain spices imported from Vietnam, India, and Syria among other countries.

Lead in medical products

Lead has been found in powders and tablets given for arthritis, infertility, upset stomach, menstrual cramps, colic, and other illnesses. These powders and tablets were traditionally used by East Indian, Indian, Middle Eastern, West Asian, and Hispanic cultures.

Traditional medicines can contain herbs, minerals, metals, or animal products that are thought to be useful in treating some ailments. Lead and other heavy metals may be added into the products during grinding, coloring, or from the package.

Lead in cosmetic products

Lead has also been found in products typically used as cosmetics or in religious ceremonies. Children and adults have been exposed to high levels of lead by ingesting a product generically called "sindoor."Though not intended to be food, sindoor might be used by some as a food additive. Traditionally, Hindu, and some Sikh.