

OUR WATER HAS BEEN TESTED FOR LEAD CONTENT AND THE RESULT WAS TOO LOW TO MEASURE. STATE REGULATIONS REQUIRE THAT YOU BE GIVEN THIS ADDITIONAL LEAD INFORMATION.

"LEAD, DRINKING WATER AND YOU" IN WATER SYSTEMS OPERATED BY  
ODD FELLOWS SIERRA RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Lead in our environment is a public health issue about which we should be concerned. Lead is a soft metal which is now known to be harmful to human health if consumed or inhaled. Since it accumulates in the body the potential for harm depends upon the level of exposure from all sources. Too much lead in the human body can cause serious damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system and red blood cells. The greatest risk, even with short term exposure is to young children and pregnant women.

There are three potential sources for lead to accumulate in the body. The major one is from food. It is also inhaled from the air. The other potential source is from drinking water. To protect the public health, public drinking water suppliers are governed by the Safe Drinking Water Act upon which the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets drinking water standards.

As your supplier of drinking water, the following information is provided to inform you of the essential adverse health effects of lead. This is being done even though your supply currently meets established standards. Established standard for lead is 0.050 parts per million. Based on new health information, the EPA is likely to lower this standard.

Lead levels in your drinking water are likely to be highest:

- a. If your home has lead pipes.
- b. If your home has copper pipes with lead solder.
- c. If your home is more than five years old.
- d. If you have soft or acidic water.
- e. If water sits in the pipes for several hours.

Typically, if lead is present in the drinking water, it enters after the water is pumped from the ground. THE MOST LIKELY SOURCE FOR LEAD CONTAMINATION IS IN THE HOME OR RESIDENCE. The most common cause of lead entering drinking water is corrosion, a reaction between the water and the lead pipes or lead-based solder. When water stands in the pipes of a residence for several hours without use, there is a potential for lead to leach, or dissolve into the water if a lead source is present. Soft water and some home water treatment devices may make your water more corrosive therefore, your residential levels may have high levels of dissolved lead.

It was common practice in the United States through the early 1900's to use lead pipes for interior plumbing. Since the 1930's copper pipe has been used for residential plumbing. Until 1966, however, lead-based solder was widely used to join copper pipes.

FEDERAL LAW now requires lead-free solder and lead-free materials be used in new household plumbing and for plumbing repairs. To find out if the plumbing in a residence contains lead, try scratching the pipe with a key or screwdriver. Lead is a soft metal and is gray in color. If lead pipes are present they will scratch easily and will be shiny when scratched.

Dissolved lead cannot be seen in water. Testing by a state approved laboratory is the only way to determine if drinking water has high levels of dissolved lead. Contact your local County Environmental Health Department or the State Department of Health for the name of an approved laboratory. The lab will provide the correct procedures to be followed for a water test. The United States EPA estimates that a test should cost somewhere between \$20.00 and \$75.00.

If drinking water is determined to have high levels of dissolved lead or if there is an abiding suspicion of lead contamination because of the presence of soft water, lead pipes, lead solder, and other lead-based plumbing materials, there are ways to minimize exposure.

One way is to "flush" each cold water faucet in the home when water stands more than a few hours. Flushing means allowing the water to run for a few minutes before each use.

Another way is one of AVOIDANCE: do not cook with or consume water from the hot water faucet. If hot water is needed for cooking or drinking, draw water from the cold water tap and heat it on the stove or in the microwave.

If plumbing repairs or other plumbing work is performed, make certain that only lead-free solder and other lead-free materials are used. This use of lead-free materials is now a Federal Law.

There are other actions which can be taken by household users to reduce the risk of lead in drinking water. For additional information please contact County or State Health Departments or the United States EPA. The EPA has a toll-free hotline dedicated to this subject: 1-800-426-4793 and has also prepared a booklet on this issue. This information has been approved by the United States EPA and meets EPA's lead public notice requirements under Section 1417 of the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendment of 1986.

Questions regarding this notice should be directed to the:  
Office of Drinking Water, Merced District (209) 445-5321

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