



HOW WILL LEAD BE DETECTED IN AND REMOVED FROM MY WATER?

The regulation for lead became effective in 1992. Between 1993 and 1995, EPA required your water supplier to collect water samples from household taps twice a year and analyze them to find out if lead is present above 15 ppb in more than 10 percent of all homes tested. If it is present above this level, the system must continue to monitor this contaminant twice a year. If contaminant levels are found to be consistently above the Action level, your water supplier must take steps to reduce the amount of lead so that it is consistently below that level. The following treatment methods have been approved by EPA for controlling lead: Corrosion control.

DRINKING WATER STANDARDS

Maximum Contaminant Level Goal:
0 (zero)

EPA Action Level:
15 parts per billion

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER!

If you would like additional information or if you have any questions concerning the City of Burlingame's testing data or water distribution system, please call the Public Works Department at 650-558-7670. You can also read our Annual Water Quality Report at www.burlingame.org/waterquality.

Do you want to learn more about drinking water regulations? Visit the State Water Resources Control Board at www.swrcb.ca.gov, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website at www.epa.gov.

City of Burlingame

Public Works Department
650-558-7670
www.burlingame.org/waterquality

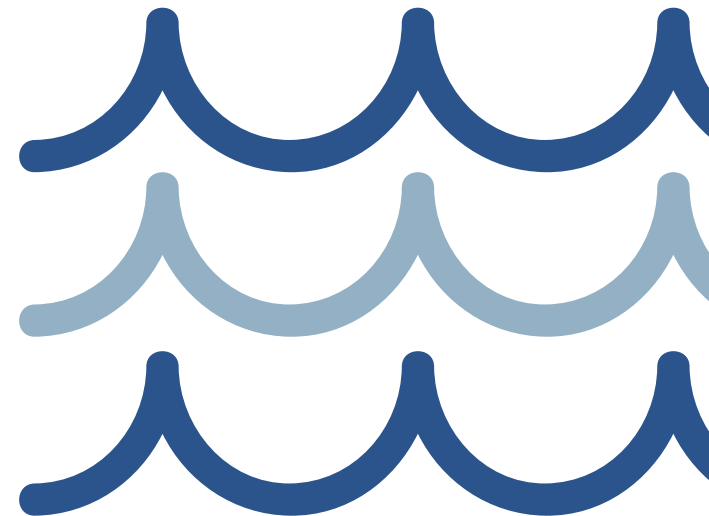
State Water Resources Control Board

District 17 - Santa Clara/San Mateo
510-620-3474
Home Treatment Device Certification Unit
916-327-1140
www.swrcb.ca.gov

Safe Drinking Water Hotline

800-426-4791
www.epa.gov

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER



WHAT IS LEAD?

Lead is a toxic metal that is harmful if inhaled or swallowed. Lead can be found in air, soil, dust, food, and water.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS?

Lead can cause a variety of adverse health effects when people are exposed to it at levels above the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for relatively short periods of time. These effects may include interference with red blood cell chemistry, delays in normal physical and mental development in babies and young children, slight deficits in the attention span, hearing, and learning abilities of children, and slight increases in the blood pressure of some adults.

Lead has the potential to cause the following effects from a lifetime exposure at levels above the MCL: stroke and kidney disease; cancer.

WHY IS LEAD BEING REGULATED?

In 1974, Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act. This law requires EPA to determine safe levels of chemicals in drinking water which do or may cause health problems. These non-enforceable levels, based solely on possible health risks and exposure, are called Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLG).

The MCLG for lead has been set at zero because EPA believes this level of protection would not cause any of the potential health problems described below.

Since lead contamination generally occurs from corrosion of household lead pipes, it cannot be directly detected or removed by the water system. Instead, EPA is requiring water systems to control the corrosiveness of their water if the level of lead at home taps exceeds an Action Level. The Action Level for lead has been set at 15 parts per billion (ppb) because EPA believes this is the lowest level to which water systems can reasonably be required to control this contaminant should it occur in drinking water at their customers home taps.

These drinking water standards and the regulations for ensuring these standards are met, are called National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. All public water supplies must abide by these regulations.

HOW MUCH COPPER IS PRODUCED AND RELEASED TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

Lead may occur in drinking water either by contamination of the source water used by the water system, or by corrosion of lead plumbing or fixtures. Corrosion of plumbing is by far the greatest cause for concern. All water is corrosive to metal plumbing materials to some degree. Grounding of household electrical systems to plumbing may also exacerbate corrosion. Over time, lead-containing plumbing materials will usually develop a scale that minimizes further corrosion of the pipe.

WHAT HAPPENS TO LEAD WHEN IT IS IN THE ENVIRONMENT?

When released to land, lead binds to soils and does not migrate to ground water. In water, it binds to sediments. It does not accumulate in fish, but does in some shellfish, such as mussels.