Corrective Actions for Schools, Child Care Centres and Large Buildings

Interpreting sample results

The sampling plan is designed to locate lead sources and to help identify where and how to proceed with corrective actions. For example:

- Where both samples from one fixture (A and B) do not contain lead at any level, no further action would be required.
- Where both samples (A and B) contain lead at or below the lead guideline, consider a flushing program.
- Where sample A (the first draw sample) has lead but sample B does not, the source of the lead would likely be from the fixture.
- Where sample B has lead but sample A does not, the source of the lead would likely be from the plumbing behind the fixture.
- Where samples from multiple fixtures have lead, corrective actions should be targeted to the entire facility.
- Where lead concentrations are found in the 1-litre incoming sample, the source is likely a lead service line.

Corrective actions for building owners

Immediate Actions for Reducing Elevated Lead Levels

- Where lead levels are above the national guideline, consider immediate action for reducing lead. This might include:
- Closing plumbing fixtures that exceed the limit (ex: removing handles, posting signs, or bagging the fixture).
- Posting “Do Not Drink” signs on taps that cannot be easily closed.
- Providing an alternate safe drinking water source (ex: bottled water coolers) particularly if the issue is widespread throughout a building.

Maintenance Solutions for Reducing Elevated Lead Levels

- Replace all lead pipes, if present.
- Replace fixtures with new “lead-free” products.
- Add point-of-use filtration devices that are NSF- certified to remove lead, changing filters as often as the manufacturer recommends. See links provided near the end of this factsheet for more information.
- Check for grounding wires attached to water pipes. An electrical current may accelerate the corrosion of lead in piping materials.

Manitoba

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- Reconfigure building plumbing to bypass sources of lead contamination. Target the small pipe branches that may have more elbows, joints and therefore more solder.
- Add automatic flushing valves to reduce water stagnation.

Operational Solutions for Reducing Lead Levels

Consider the following steps to reduce lead if levels are below the national guideline but still detectable:

- Implement daily or weekly flushing programs as needed - running all indoor taps and water fountains until the water is clear and cold. The flushing program should be supported with standard operating procedures and initialed logs.
- Schools and child care centres should consider flushing Monday mornings before students arrive each week to remove stagnant water.
- Advise students and staff or residents to run the water until cold before drinking.
- Clean tap aerators regularly.
- Use only cold clear water for food and beverage preparation. Hot water will dissolve lead more quickly than cold water and is likely to contain increased levels of lead or other contaminants.

Corrective actions for tenants and renters

It is recommended that tenants and renters share test results and renters share test results with their building owner or maintenance committee. Where lead levels are above the national guideline, tenants and renters should consider the following options for reducing lead exposure:

- Use an alternate safe drinking water source ex: bottled water)
- Use a pitcher-type filter, or point-of-use filter that attaches to the kitchen tap. Filters must be NSF-certified to remove lead, and must be changed as often at the manufacturer recommends. Filters are available at many hardware or grocery stores. See links provided near the end of this factsheet for more information.
- Clean tap aerators regularly.
- Using only cold clear water for food and beverage preparation.

Communication plan

In addition to testing for lead and taking corrective actions, consider developing a communication plan to advise parents or residents and make the results available to them. If increased lead levels are identified, communicate on actions taken to correct the problems found.

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living and the Regional Health Authority can assist with health risk communication to the public. An example of a communication notice is found here: **manitoba.ca/sd/water/drinking_water/lead/public_communication_ex.pdf**

For additional information, see the fact sheet *Lead in Drinking Water: Information for Manitoba Schools, Child Care Centres and Large Buildings*