

# **LEAD PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM**

## **LEAD & YOUR DRINKING WATER**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Mosinee Water Utility are concerned about lead in your drinking water. Although most homes have very low levels of lead in their drinking water, some homes in the community have lead levels above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb), or 0.015 milligrams of lead per liter of water (mg/L). Lead in your drinking water may come from materials commonly used in plumbing and water distribution systems, such as service lines, pipes, brass and bronze fixtures or solders and fluxes. Corrosive water may remove lead from these materials, causing lead to enter your drinking water.

## **SOURCES OF LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like ground water, rivers or lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome plated brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of lead that connect your house to the water main (service lines). In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater than 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials to 0.8%.

When water stands in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon after returning from work or school, can contain fairly high levels of lead.

## **HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD**

Lead is a common, natural and often used metal found throughout the environment in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery, porcelain, pewter and water. Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body. Lead builds up over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk is to young children and pregnant women. Amounts of lead that will not hurt adults can cause delays in normal mental and physical development in babies and young children, and slight deficits in attention span, hearing and learning abilities. Lead exposure may also cause slight increases in the blood pressure of some adults.

## **STEPS YOU CAN TAKE AT HOME TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER**

To find out whether you need to take action in your own home, have your drinking water tested to determine if it contains excessive concentrations of lead. You can't see, taste or smell lead in drinking water, so the only sure way to find out if your drinking water contains excess lead is to get your water tested.

If a water test indicates that the drinking water drawn from a tap in your home contains lead above 15 ppb, then you should take the following precautions:

Flush the tap before using it for drinking or cooking anytime the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than six (6) hours. Water sitting in pipes for a while can contain lead levels higher than normal. To properly flush the tap, run the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 15 to 30 seconds. If your house has a lead service line to the water main, you may have to flush the water for several minutes before drinking it. Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw from the cold tap and heat it. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your family's health. It usually uses less than one or two gallons of water and costs less than 50 cents per month. To conserve water, fill a couple of bottles for drinking water after flushing the tap, and whenever possible use the first flush water to wash dishes or water plants.

**ACTIONS WE'RE TAKING TO REDUCE LEAD**

We are required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water. This is an ongoing process. This program includes corrosion control treatment, source water treatment and public education.

We are also required to replace each lead service that we control if the line contributes lead concentrations of 15 ppb or more after a comprehensive treatment program has been completed.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

You can consult a variety of sources for additional information. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead.

The Mosinee Water & Sewer Utility at 715-693-3840 can provide you with information about our community's water supply and a list of local laboratories that have been certified by EPA for testing water quality;

The City of Mosinee @ 715-693-2275 can provide you with information about building permit records; and

The State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Health @ 608-266-1826 or the Marathon County Health Department at 261-1908 can provide you with additional information about the health effects of lead and how you can have your child's blood tested.

The following is a list of some of the state approved laboratories in our area that you can contact to have your water tested for lead:

State Lab of Hygiene  
465 Henry Mall  
Madison, WI 53706  
608-262-3458

Northern Lake Service  
400 North Lake Ave.  
Crandon, WI 54520-1298  
715-478-3060

***FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:***

*City of Mosinee – Water Utility  
225 Main St.  
Mosinee, WI 54455  
Ph. 715-693-3840  
Email: publicworks@mosinee.wi.us*

*I certify that the information and statements contained in this Public Education are true and correct and have been provided to consumers in accordance with the delivery, content, format and deadline requirements of Subchapter X of ch. NR 809, Wis. Adm. Code.*

*X Kevin Breit – Director of Public Works  
Signature*