

Facts about Lead in our Water

- The City of Lancaster Water Bureau is paying close attention to what unfolded in Flint, Michigan, and our thoughts are with all those who are struggling without access to safe and reliable water in their homes. Customers who receive water service from the City of Lancaster the City of have no reason to question the safety of water at the tap.
- Flint underscores that our first job is to protect the families we serve. Those of us involved in managing, cleaning and delivering water share a solemn obligation to protect public health.
- We do not have first-hand information about what occurred in Flint, but this much seems clear: When Flint switched its water supply source, it did not take the required steps to manage water chemistry. The new water caused lead to leach from service lines and home plumbing –that lead ended up in water coming out of the taps.
- Lead does not come from the treatment plants and water mains; it comes from lead service lines running between the water main in the street and the home, and from plumbing inside the home. In our community, we have less than 2% of lead service lines remaining in our system. We proactively replace lead service lines every year and we require the home owner to replace their portion of the service line if we discover that their plumbing also contains lead. When we replace mains, we remove the City's lead lines and work with the owners to replace their lines. Replacing these lines require a collaborative effort between our customers and our utility. So as communities and as a broader society, we must advance a serious discussion on how we pay to get the lead out.
- This kind of incident is unlikely here. Since 1992, the City has added a low-level corrosion inhibitor to the water. This additive prevents the dissolving of lead (from home plumbing materials) into the water. We also routinely test for lead in the drinking water at selected older high-risk homes. If more than 10 percent of the homes tested have high lead levels (over 15 parts-per-billion), the City Water Department must notify their consumers. Be assured our water does not have a high level of lead. The City is in compliance with the PA Department of Environmental Regulation Lead & Copper Rule.
- We are not content to simply comply with regulations. We observe the letter of the law and embrace the spirit of it. We conduct over 30,000 water quality test every single year to ensure we are providing the highest quality water we can to our customers.
- There is positive movement in the national approach to eliminating lead risks. The U.S. federal regulation that address lead in drinking water – the Lead and Copper Rule – is currently under revision. The National Drinking Water Advisory Council, which advises the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has recommended that utilities should create plans for removal of all lead

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service lines within their systems, with a shared responsibility between the utility and their customers, which we already do here in Lancaster. It also advised that utilities should engage in more outreach to customers on lead, including assisting them with testing their water.

- If you are a property owner, there are steps you can take to address potential risks from lead in water. Lead service lines are typically only present in older homes, but older brass faucets with lead content can be in newer homes. A certified plumber can tell you for sure if you have a lead service line, check for lead solders in your internal pipes and look for fixtures containing lead.
- The only way to know with certainty if you have lead at the tap is to have your water tested by a certified laboratory. If you or your plumber has determined that your home has a lead service line, contact our Water Bureau at 291- 4880 about working together to replace it. • The City of Lancaster is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in each home. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using the water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you can have the water tested. Information is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>, or call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD.
- There are other steps you can take to protect your family, including purchasing a certified water filter to remove lead, making sure you flush out the lines after a period of stagnation in order to get fresh water that is coming from the main, and avoiding consuming water from the hot water tap, where lead is more likely to be present. You can find more guidance on www.DrinkTap.org.

Additional Facts About Lead

Lead was used as a component of paint, piping (including water service lines), solder, brass, and as a gasoline additive. Lead is no longer used in many of these products, but homes built prior to 1980 could contain high lead paints and plumbing fixtures. Lead can enter tap water through corrosion of brass or chrome plated plumbing materials. EPA and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control report lead paint (and the contaminated dust and soil it generates) is the leading source of lead exposure in older homes.

A number of successful steps were taken in the 1980's to reduce lead in drinking water. As of 1986, the Safe Drinking Water Act prohibits the use of pipe, solder or flux containing high lead levels. The Lead Contamination Control Act of 1988 requires schools and day-care centers to repair or remove water coolers with lead-lined tanks.

If you have questions about lead or water quality concerns, please contact our Water Quality Supervisor drajchel@cityoflancasterpa.com or call 717.291.4833.

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Local Research on High Blood Levels in Children

Lancaster General Hospital's Lead Coalition conducted a research study in 2015 and concluded that there is no association between lead service lines and high blood lead levels in children. More information can be obtained about the Lancaster Lead Coalition at:

<http://www.lancastergeneralhealth.org/LGH/About-Lancaster-General-Health/Community-Health-Involvement/CBU/CBU/Community-Benefit-Update/2010-Community-Benefit-Update/September-2010-Edition/Lead-Coalition-formed-to-keep-kids-safe.aspx>

Conclusions

Existing lead pipe densities vary across Lancaster City

Individual lead tests identified in homes with lead pipes do not have higher EBLL rates

There is no association between areal lead pipe densities and areal EBLL rates in Lancaster City

Identical results from LG Health lead screening (2010-2015 age 0-18: LG Health screens only) and PADOH lead screening (2006-2012 age 0-7: all screens)

There is no association between areal lead pipe densities and percentage of the population < 18

