



Lead in Drinking Water — School Information Sheet

Lead Risk

Lead is toxic to children and adults. Young children are particularly vulnerable to lead because the physical and behavioral effects of lead occur at lower exposure levels in children than in adults. A dose of lead that would have little effect on an adult can have a significant effect on a child. In children, low levels of exposure have been linked to damage to the central and peripheral nervous system, learning disabilities, shorter stature, impaired hearing, and impaired formation and function of blood cells. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that drinking water can make up 20 percent or more of a person's total exposure to lead.

How Lead Can get in Your School's Water?

Lead can enter drinking water when plumbing materials containing lead corrode. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are copper pipe with lead solder, galvanized pipe, faucets, lead goose necks, and lead service lines (LSL). Typically, the most significant source of lead in water is due to LSLs. LSLs are lead pipes that connect the school or facility to the water main. Lead pipes are more likely to be found in structures built before 1986. For schools without LSLs, the most common lead source is plumbing with lead solder and brass or chrome-plated brass faucets. A number of factors are involved in the extent lead enters the water, including the chemistry of the water, temperature of the water, amount of wear in the pipes, how long the water stays in pipes, and the amount of lead the water comes into contact with.

What You Can Do

- Conduct a walkthrough of the school. Identify all faucets and fixtures used for drinking water and cooking. Be sure to look for lead free certification marks and the types of plumbing materials used.
- Learn if your school has a lead service line. The first step for identifying your service line material is to call your water system to ask what materials your water service line is made of. Service lines can consist of many different parts and materials. Your water system provider may not know the material of every portion of the service line. Questions to ask your water provider include:
 - What materials your water service line is made of
 - If lead goosenecks or pigtails were ever used and during what years were they common
 - Their confidence in their service line inventory data
 - Ask for a copy of the most recent Consumer Confidence Report
- For more information regarding flushing programs and other control measures, please reference the [EPA's 3Ts](#) step by step guidance document or contact Delaware Division of Public Health, Health Systems Protection at HSPContact@delaware.gov. HSP can assist with technical guidance and may



be able to support sampling and other activities needed to reduce exposure to lead.

Resources:

- CDC “Sources of Lead: Water:” <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm>
- EPA 3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities: [3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities \(epa.gov\)](http://www.epa.gov/3ts)
- EPA Guideline to Identify Lead Free Certification Marks: <https://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100LVYK.txt>