MaineWater

FACTS ABOUT
Lead in Drinking Water

Lead in Drinking Water

Lead is rarely found in surface water (lakes, streams) and groundwater (aquifers, wells). The primary way lead enters tap water is when the water comes in contact with lead service lines or household plumbing (pipes, faucets) made from lead.

Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.

Maine Water does ongoing extensive water testing for lead and other contaminants to ensure the public safety and maintain the quality of our potable drinking water in all of our systems across the state of Maine. Compliance with federal and state regulations requires routine monitoring for 120 different chemical, radiological and microbiological contaminants. Maine Water performs over 150,000 water quality analyses using online instruments and laboratory analysis of more than 3600 collected water samples each year, as required by the Maine Drinking Water Program. You can be assured that:

- Maine Water conducts extensive water quality testing at our sources and within our distribution system.
- We have not detected lead in any of our sources of supplies or distribution system.
- We fully comply with the EPA requirements regarding sampling for lead in drinking water and have provided documentation to State health officials of our results.
- We are confident in the water quality that we provide our customers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does Maine Water do to ensure that the water delivered to our customers is safe to drink?

Maine Water has an extensive program of water quality protection that includes land ownership, watershed inspections, and source water quality monitoring.

In addition, regular water quality testing is done in all of our water systems and continues to show that the water delivered to our customers is in compliance with state and federal drinking water standards and is safe to drink.

Our water quality testing data is regularly reviewed for potential changes or trends and any customer water quality complaint is escalated to professionals in our water quality team.

Where can customers review water quality test results for their system?

Water quality reports that detail information on the results of water quality testing done in your town, include information about the company's water systems along with source-protection measures, are made available annually to all of our customers and are on our website at www.mainewater.com/water-quality/water-quality-report

Where can customers review lead test results for their system?

Lead test results can be viewed on our website at www.mainewater.com/water-quality/lead-test-results

What is done specifically to protect our water sources?

Maine Water has an extensive program of water quality protection that includes land ownership, watershed inspections, and source water quality monitoring. These programs are overseen by the Maine Drinking Water Program.

What is done specifically to protect customers from lead in water?

In addition to limiting our supplies to quality sources with source protection measures, we also have a comprehensive approach to control lead in our water systems. This approach includes sampling and chemical addition in our treatment and distribution systems for corrosion control to maintain water quality and protect our customers from the potential for lead to enter their drinking water. We have a program in place, as required under Federal law, to minimize the potential for lead to enter your drinking water.

How does lead get into the water in a customer's home?

Lead typically enters drinking water as a result of corrosion, or wearing away, of materials in household plumbing containing lead. These materials include lead-based solder that in the past had been used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome-plated brass faucets, and in some cases, the service line that connects your house to the water main, if the pipe is made of lead.

What has been done to limit the risks of lead in household plumbing?

In 1986, Congress banned the use of lead solder containing greater that 0.2% lead, and restricted the lead content of faucets, pipes and other plumbing materials to 8.0%, however the internal plumbing in older homes may still contain lead piping.

In homes where there is still lead in internal plumbing and fixtures, under certain pH conditions, lead may dissolve into the drinking water after it has sat in the internal plumbing for some time. As such, sampling under our lead and copper program intentionally focuses on homes with older plumbing and samples are taken with the first water drawn from the tap in the morning.

What does the Company do if they detect lead in a customer's water?

We monitor for lead from customer's homes to confirm that the chemical treatment processes remain effective. In instances where the lead in a customer's home is above the action level set by Federal Standards (15 part per billion), we notify the customer right away. If 10% or more of the samples collected from a public water system are above the Federal Standards we notify all customers within the service area.

What can you do if you are concerned about lead in your internal plumbing?

See the Center for Disease Control at http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm or the US EPA to learn more, including steps you can take to reduce your risk of consuming lead from drinking water.

How are new fixtures regulated for lead content?

In 2014, the US EPA added an amendment to the Safe Drinking Water act that states that new fixtures must contain no more than .25% lead. You can learn more about it at https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-143/subpart-B.

What is the Safe Drinking Water Act?

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) was originally passed by Congress in 1974 to protect public health by regulating the nation's public drinking water supply. The law has been amended since, and requires many actions to protect drinking water and its sources—rivers, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and ground water wells. US EPA, states, and water systems work together to make sure that these standards are met.

For more information about the SDWA go to https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/overview-safe-drinking-water-act.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Customer Service at 1-800-287-1643 or send an e-mail to CustomerService@mainewater.com.