



## **Facts About Lead Levels and the Town of Leesburg's Water System**

### **What is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard for lead in drinking water?**

Lead standards in drinking water are regulated by the Lead and Copper Rule (LCR). The LCR states that 90 percent of samples analyzed must be less than the action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). If more than 10 percent of the samples exceed the action level, a utility is required to take action which may include changes to the water treatment process, replacement of lead service lines, and public outreach. The Town of Leesburg has been testing for lead in accordance with the LCR since 1992 and test results have consistently been below the action level.

### **Does the Town of Leesburg have elevated levels of lead in its drinking water?**

No. Testing in accordance with EPA guidelines has demonstrated that there are no elevated levels of lead in the drinking water provided by the Town of Leesburg. Since testing began in the early 1990s, the Town of Leesburg's levels have tested well within the EPA's compliance standards. In the most recent LCR sampling period for the Town of Leesburg, 100 percent of the samples tested were significantly below the EPA action level of 15 ppb.

### **What is the relationship between the EPA action level for drinking water and lead levels in blood?**

The EPA action level of 15 ppb of lead in drinking water was established based on reasonable risk assessments. It is the level that requires additional corrective and educational actions, but does not necessarily directly correlate to increased blood-lead levels. Blood-lead levels are reflective of a variety of factors, such as age, exposure to materials containing lead (such as paint, dust, and soil), and the amount of water consumed daily. Nationally, the biggest source of increased blood-lead levels in children is the ingestion of lead-based paint chips.

### **What are the health effects of too much lead?**

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. For infants and children, exposure to high levels of lead in drinking water can result in delays in physical or mental development. Infants who consume mostly mixed formula can receive a greater lead percentage because of the large volume of water they consume relative to their body size. For adults, exposure to high levels of lead can result in kidney problems or high blood pressure. Although the main sources of exposure to lead are ingesting paint chips and inhaling dust, the EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of human exposure to lead may come from drinking water.

### **How does lead get into drinking water?**

Although some utilities use source waters that contain lead, the Town of Leesburg's water sources (the Potomac River and Paxton Well) do not contain lead. Lead in drinking water can also come from pipes and valves within the distribution system. The Town of Leesburg's water mains and valves in the distribution system do not contain lead.

Another source of lead in drinking water is household plumbing. In 1986, lead was banned from being used in manufacturing pipe and solder for drinking water systems. In older homes, where lead is present in pipe and solder connections, it may dissolve into the water after the water sits for long periods of time. Some household plumbing components may contain a small amount of lead and can contribute to lead concentrations at the tap.

### **What is the Town of Leesburg doing to minimize lead exposure from my plumbing system?**

The source water from the Potomac River contains high levels of hardness and alkalinity that naturally help to reduce the corrosion potential of the water. During the treatment process, the Town of Leesburg provides adjustments to finished water pH to minimize corrosion to your household plumbing.



### What can I do in my home to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water?

- Any time the water has been sitting unused for six hours or longer, flush your cold-water pipes by running the water until it becomes a constant temperature. Saving the water for other purposes, such as plant watering, is a good conservation measure.
- Use only water from the cold-water tap for drinking, cooking and especially for making baby formula. Hot water may contain higher levels of lead.
- Boiling water **DOES NOT** reduce its lead content; in fact, it may increase the lead concentration.
- Install a water filter. If you choose to do so, follow these three important suggestions:
  1. Choose a filter designed for the specific filtration desired, such as lead.
  2. Make sure the filter is approved by the National Sanitation Foundation ([www.nsf.org](http://www.nsf.org)).
  3. Maintain the filter as directed by the manufacturer.

### How do I have the water in my home tested?

For questions regarding water testing, contact the Town's Department of Utilities at 703-771-2750. Independent certified laboratories are available and a list of these laboratories may be found on the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services website at:

[www.dgs.virginia.gov/DivisionofConsolidatedLaboratoryServices/Services/LaboratoryCertification/tabid/508/Default.aspx](http://www.dgs.virginia.gov/DivisionofConsolidatedLaboratoryServices/Services/LaboratoryCertification/tabid/508/Default.aspx) ,

or by calling 1-866-493-1087.

### Where can I find more information about lead in drinking water?

Information about lead is also available on the following Web sites (as of April 2016):

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/documents/pdf/ParentFactSheet.pdf>

<http://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead#homeleadsafe>

[www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm)