

LEAD PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM for NEW RICHMOND WATER UTILITY

Since 1993 New Richmond Water Utility has tested the municipal water system for lead. In September, 20 samples were taken from residences; two of which were from vacant homes and a third from an older residence. These three samples exceeded the allowable contaminant level for lead of 15 parts per billion. The Water Utility has been taking these samples every three years and this is the only time that more than one sample has exceeded the lead limits. These samples represent a relatively small portion of our population and therefore it is important for each homeowner to consider their own home water supply when determining how to react to these findings. New Richmond Water Utility will work with DNR to conduct an extensive public education program regarding the presence of lead. All of the City's wells have been tested and were found to be below the normal lead parameters. Please consider the following information carefully when determining your response to this occurrence.

"Water coming from some outlets in this facility may have elevated levels of lead. Always flush the faucet before using the water for drinking or cooking."

The United States environmental protection agency (EPA) and New Richmond Utilities 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). Under federal law we are required to have a program in place to minimize lead in your drinking water by June 30, 2012. This program includes corrosion control treatment, source water treatment, and public education. We are also required to replace each lead service line that we control if the line contributes lead concentrations of more than 15 ppb after we have completed the comprehensive treatment program. If you have any questions about how we are carrying out the requirements of the lead regulation please give us a call at 715-246-4167. This brochure explains the simple steps you can take to protect you and your family by reducing your exposure to lead in drinking water.

Health effects of Lead.

Lead is a common metal found throughout the environment in lead-based paint, air, soil, household dust, food, certain types of pottery porcelain and pewter and water. Lead can pose a significant risk to your health if too much of it enters your body. Lead builds up in the body over many years and can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected, more than healthy adults at lower levels of lead. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones while in utero, which may affect the child's brain development.

Lead in drinking water

Lead in drinking water, although rarely the sole cause of lead poisoning, can significantly increase a person's total lead exposure, particularly the exposure of infants who drink baby formulas and concentrated juices that are mixed with water. The EPA estimates that drinking water can make up 20% or more of a person's total exposure to lead. Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and 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 8.0%. 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, may contain fairly high levels of lead.

Steps you can take to reduce exposure to Lead in drinking Water

Despite our best efforts mentioned earlier to control water corrosively and remove lead from the water supply, lead levels in some homes or buildings can be high. 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. Testing the

water is essential because you cannot see, taste or smell lead in drinking water. Some local laboratories that can provide this service are listed at the end of this booklet. For more information on having your water tested, please call 715-246-4167.

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:

- Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in a faucet has gone unused for more than 6 hours. The longer water resides in your home's plumbing the more lead it may contain. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet until the water gets noticeably colder, usually about 15-30 seconds. If your house has a lead service line to the water main, you may have to flush the water for a longer time, perhaps one minute, before drinking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your family's health.
- Try not to cook with, or drink water from the hot water tap. Hot water can dissolve more lead more quickly than cold water. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and heat it on the stove.
- Remove loose lead solder and debris from the plumbing materials installed in newly constructed homes, or homes in which the plumbing has recently been replaced, by removing the faucet strainers from all taps and running the water from 3 to 5 minutes. Thereafter, periodically remove the strainers and flush out any debris that has accumulated over time.
- Determine whether or not the service line that connects your home or apartment to the water main is made of lead. The best way to determine if your service line is made of lead is by either hiring a licensed plumber to inspect the line or by contacting the plumbing contractor who installed the line. You can identify the plumbing contractor by checking the city's record of building permits which should be maintained in the files of the City of New Richmond Building Permit Department. A licensed plumber can at the same time check to see if your home's plumbing contains lead solder, lead pipes or pipe fittings that contain lead. The public water system that delivers water to your home should also maintain records of the materials located in the distribution system.
- Have an electrician check your wiring. If grounding wires from the electrical system are attached to your pipes, corrosion may be greater. Check with a licensed electrician or your local electrical code to determine if your wiring can be grounded elsewhere.

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. State and local government agencies that can be contacted include:

New Richmond Utilities at 715-246-4167 can provide you with information about your community's water supply, and a list of local laboratories that have been certified by EPA for testing water quality;

City of New Richmond Building Inspections at 715-246-4268 can provide you with information about building permit records that should contain the names of plumbing contractors that plumbed your home; and

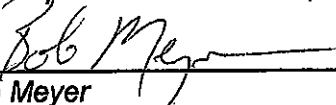
St. Croix County Department of Health and Human Services-Public Health at 715-246-8263 can provide you with information about the health effects of lead and how you can have your child's blood tested.

The following is a list of some state approved laboratories in your area that you can call to have your water tested for lead.

- Commercial Testing Lab – 1-800-962-3121
- WI State Lab of Hygiene – 1-800-442-4618

For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home or building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/lead>

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.

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