

Lead and Copper Rule Q&As – State of Michigan

Q: Why are these changes happening?

A: The Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act in 2018 was expanded in order to better protect and prioritize the public health of Michiganders. With the changes added to the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act in 2018, our state now has the strongest protections in the United States against lead in drinking water. These changes put Michigan on track to steadily reduce and ultimately eliminate lead drinking water pipes.

Q: What are the specific changes to the rule?

A: The significant changes under the new rule are as follows:

Lead sampling in homes with lead service lines now involve a first liter water sample and a new fifth liter water sample to represent water that has been contained in the lead service line.

Preliminary service line inventories are due to EGLE by January 1, 2020.

By January 1, 2021, communities that have lead service lines must begin replacing them.

Water supplies are required to replace an average of 5 percent of their lead service lines every year for the next 20 years unless an alternate schedule is approved by EGLE.

Water supplies are now responsible for removing the entire lead service line from the main to the home including all costs.

Partial lead service line replacements are now banned.

Complete service line inventories are due to EGLE by January 1, 2025.

The Action Level for lead in drinking water will be lowered from the current level of 15 parts per billion (ppb) to 12 ppb on January 1, 2025.

Q: Why might some homes show high lead levels when tested under the new sampling methods?

A: The previous rules only tested the first liter of tap water. When there are high levels of lead at the first liter, the source is likely inside the home, such as lead faucets, pipes or lead solder on pipes. The new rules also test the fifth liter, which is water that has been sitting in the pipe that is the service line from the water main in the street to the meter in your home. When there is a high result at the fifth liter, it may mean additional corrosion control or removal of your line is necessary. If Michigan's more rigorous

sampling procedure was required by the EPA for the rest of the country, they would also be reporting higher values at some locations

Q: Will the state be offering bottled water to communities that have lead exceedances?

A: No, the state will not be offering bottled water.

Q: What should I do if I am concerned about my family's health?

A: Consider testing your home's water. If your public water supplier is not able or willing to sample your home, you can easily do it yourself. To get it tested, contact a [laboratory certified for lead analysis](#) or [request information from your local health department](#).

Use an NSF-certified filter and only use cold water for drinking or cooking.

Use filtered or alternative source of water for powdered infant formula.

Run your water before using it for drinking or cooking (also called flushing your lines).

Get your child's blood lead level tested by your physician or the local health department.

Q: What do I do if I am concerned about other sources of lead in my home?

A: Lead can come from many sources: lead-based paint chips, dust, soil, household items, and foods. Lead water pipes can sometimes be found in older homes; and drinking water faucets manufactured before 2014 were allowed to contain up to 8% lead. Elevated blood levels in children are primarily caused by ingestion of lead from paint, dust, and soil.

- To reduce lead exposure in the home:
- Regularly wash hands, toys, and horizontal surfaces with a damp cloth or paper towel (wet cleaning methods).
- Vacuum with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtered vacuum.
- Take shoes off before entering the home or living areas.
- Wash hands before eating to avoid accidentally eating lead dust and soil.
- Grow fruits and vegetables in raised beds.
- Hire certified lead professionals to assist with home renovations in pre-1978 housing.

Q: How can residents get more information or have more questions answered?

A: To allow for further education and conversation surrounding these changes to the Michigan Safe Drinking Water, EGLE and MDHHS will be hosting three virtual town halls on July 9, 10, and 11. To attend the virtual townhalls go to www.michigan.gov/mileadsafe on either July 9, 10, 11th at 6pm to participate.

Q: When is the Lead and Copper Rule sampling data due and when can communities expect to learn their results?

A: Sample results are due for approximately 100 communities on July 10, 2019 and approximately 500 more on October 10, 2019. It will take an average of one or two months for EGLE to process all of the results and develop the 90th percentile, which is what is compared to the Action Level.

Q: What is the 90th percentile?

A: The lead and copper rule requires the 90th percentile to be calculated and compared to the Action Level.

The 90th percentile is a measure of statistical distribution, not unlike the median. The median is the middle value. The median is the value for which 50% of the values were bigger, and 50% smaller. The 90th percentile tells you the value for which 90% of the data points are smaller and 10% are bigger.

Q: Where can we see the results?

A: In an effort to increase transparency and communication, once results have been verified, the 90th percentile will be posted on the Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe website. The 90th percentile is based on sampling done at individual homes; the data from those individual homes will not be posted online.

Q: If a water system tests over the lead limit BEFORE the official state requirement for lead line removal will they have to remove those lines sooner?

A: The old rules (both federal and state) require a supply that exceeds the Action Level to begin replacing lead service lines at a rate of 7 percent per year if they cannot address the issue via treatment or other means. This requirement is still in place and is supplemented by the rule that requires water supplies to remove an average of 5 percent per year regardless of whether they exceed the Action Level.

Q: Who is paying for privately-owned lead line removal?

A: The water supplier must use revenue it collects from customers to pay for lead line removal. There are grants and loans available from the state to assist with this cost.

Q: When do all of the lead service lines in Michigan need to be removed?

A: The new rule requires an average of 5 percent of lead service lines to be removed each year unless an alternative schedule is approved by EGLE. In most cases, lead service lines will be removed in 20 years.

Q: What will the new lead Action Level be for the state?

A: Beginning on January 1, 2025, the Lead Action Level will be lowered to 12 ppb. Until then, the Action Level is 15 ppb.

Q: How are homes prioritized for testing?

A: Water supplies must take compliance samples at a select subset of homes based on risk factors identified in the regulations. Homes with more risk for exposure are prioritized. Homes with lead services lines are given highest priority.

Q: What else is being done to clean up drinking water around the state?

A: The Governor has proposed a budget that cleans up drinking water, fixes our roads and closes the skills-gap. The Governor remains fully committed to ensuring every community has access to safe, clean drinking water. That's why the budget includes:

- \$120 million to improve our drinking water infrastructure. This funding would assist with ongoing service line replacements, research and treatment of PFAS, and research on how best to optimize water distribution systems.
- \$37.5 million for lead and copper rule implementation
- \$30 million for PFAS and emerging contaminants
- \$7.5 million for identify best practices for water affordability and sustainable rates.
- \$40 million for Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) Loan Forgiveness to increase participation through grant process.
- \$5 million for research and innovation
- \$60 million to install hydration stations in school buildings.

Q: Is this similar to what took place in Flint?

A: No. The possibility of higher lead results in these cases will be because of the new, stricter testing procedure. While Flint's water quality has been meeting state and federal standards since July of 2016, we are determined to continue working toward restoring trust in state government and ensuring that - not just Flint residents – but every Michigander has access to safe, clean drinking water.

The city of Flint continues to remove and replace lead and galvanized steel service lines, creating a safe and lasting infrastructure. The city anticipates that pipe replacement should be complete at the end of July.