



LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

COMPLIANCE INFORMATION FOR CHILDCARE FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WHAT IS LEAD?

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that can be found in all parts of our environment. Lead-contaminated dust and particles can exist in the air, the soil, the water, or the ground surfaces where people walk and play. When lead is ingested, it is toxic and harmful to humans, even in small amounts.

WHO IS AT RISK?

- Children who are six years old and under are at the greatest risk when exposed to lead, because their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults.
- Pregnant women and nursing mothers should avoid exposure to lead to protect their children.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

Elevated blood lead levels can have significant negative health impacts, including:

- delays in physical and mental development;
- anemia;
- kidney and brain damage;
- lower IQ levels;
- reduced attention span;
- learning disabilities;
- hearing loss;
- hyperactivity; and
- poor classroom performance.

Eliminating sources of lead, before exposure can occur, is considered the best strategy to protect children from potential adverse health outcomes.

REQUIREMENTS FOR DC-LICENSED CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Lead enters the water through contact with plumbing from corrosion of pipes, solder, fittings, fixtures, and faucets. DC's action level for lead in drinking water is five parts per billion (5 ppb). "The Childhood Lead Exposure Prevention Amendment Act of 2017" (DC Law 22-21) requires DC-licensed childcare facilities to:

- locate all drinking water sources within their facility;
- install and maintain water filters that are certified to remove lead on all drinking water sources;
- post conspicuous signs near each of the facility water sources that are not drinking water sources;
- annually test all drinking water sources for lead; and
- notify parents and guardians of children attending the facility of any test results exceeding 5 ppb and planned remediation steps within 5 business days of receiving the test result.

In coordination with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, DC's Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) offers the following services to DC-licensed childcare facilities:

- annual drinking water testing for lead; and
- installation of filters certified for lead reduction to the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF)/American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard 53 for Health Effects or NSF/ANSI Standard 61 for Health Effects.

The filters DOEE installs are not effective when running hot water from the faucet. Hot water may contain higher amounts of dissolved minerals, so only use cold water from the faucet for consumption and cooking. Boiling water does not remove lead.

REDUCE EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

In addition to installing water filters and replacing them regularly, follow and share the tips below to reduce the risk of exposure to lead in drinking water.

- Do not cook or mix infant formula using hot water from the tap.
- Regularly clean the faucet aerators on all drinking water sources.
- Run the water briefly prior to consuming to flush the lines.
- Do not consume water that has been sitting in the plumbing system for more than six hours. To avoid this, run the tap for at least one minute in the morning or any other time water has not been used in the facility for more than six hours prior to consuming.