

FAQ: Addressing Concerns About Lead in Drinking Water

Q: How often does LWD test for lead?

A: Our annual Water Quality Report summarizes the most recent lead and copper test results, and it shows the system complies with water quality standards. The state only requires LWD to conduct lead and copper sampling once every three years because past years' results show little risk for lead contamination throughout the town. Read the Water Quality Reports here.

<http://www.lwd.com/water-department/conservation-and-environmental-programs/>

Q: How does lead get into drinking water?

A: Untreated groundwater is often corrosive and can cause the toxic metal to leach into drinking water from lead pipes or solder if it is present in the system or a building's plumbing. LWD takes the following steps to address and monitor this issue:

- LWD tests regularly for lead and copper per state regulations, and our results are well within drinking water standards. The next routine sampling is scheduled for this summer.
- LWD raises the pH of the water to a target level of 7.4 to minimize the potential for leaching of any lead in the system, especially in homes with lead solder in the plumbing.
- LWD treats the water with enough chlorine to address any potential bacterial contamination, but not enough to cause corrosion.
- A small amount of orthophosphate is added to form a protective coating inside the pipes, creating a barrier between any lead material and the water.

Q: Are there lead pipes in the LWD system?

A: Our water system began in 1912 and, while we do not believe there to be any lead service lines in the system, some of our 100-year-old records are not perfect. However, the test results for lead in the system are well-below water quality standards, and our crews do not encounter lead pipes when working on the system.

Q: Is there lead in my home's plumbing system?

A: While we do not believe there to be any lead service lines in the system, homes built between 1912 and 1935 are the most likely to have lead service lines. You can check to see if your home has a lead service line by following these instructions.

<http://gbwater.org/media/82002/lead-pipe-identification-brochure.pdf>

Home plumbing also often uses lead in the solder of the copper joints. LWD takes steps to reduce the corrosiveness of its water to prevent the leaching of lead. Before use, we recommend allowing taps that have been unused for a period of time to run for a minute or two to flush out standing water.

You may also take a lead sample from your own tap and send it to a private lab for testing. The cost is generally about \$25. For your reference, here is a list of nearby MassDEP-certified laboratories:

ALPHA ANALYTICAL
8 WALKUP DR, WESTBOROUGH, MA 01581-1019
(508) 898-9220

WORCESTER WATER FILTRATION PLANT LAB
71 STONE HOUSE HILL RD, HOLDEN, MA 01520-0000
(508) 799-1513

NASHOBA ANALYTICAL LLC
31A WILLOW RD, AYER, MA 01432-0000
(978) 391-4428

SGS ACCUTEST-MARLBOROUGH
50 DANVELO DR, MARLBOROUGH, MA 01752-0000
(508) 481-6200

ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING AND RESEARCH
60 ELM HILL AVE, LEOMINSTER, MA 01453-4225
(978) 840-2941

Q: Where can I go for more information?

A: If you have additional questions or concerns, please call LWD at 978-540-2222 and ask to speak to Corey Godfrey, Environmental Analyst.