



November 20, 2017

Resident of Farmer City:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

The City of Farmer City found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in **three (3)** homes. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

What happened?

The City tested the water in 10 (ten) homes, chosen randomly throughout the City, for lead levels, per the IEPA. Three (3) of those homes received higher than 15 ppb readings, which requires us to notify all residents. Those residents have been notified individually, so if you did not receive a direct notice from us, you are not included. We believe the cause was due to stagnant water, possible lead service lines or lead joints in the distribution line.

What is Being Done?

- The City has undertaken voluntary follow-up sampling of our source water for lead and follow-up sampling from our distribution system for other chemicals. We are awaiting the results of those tests, but do not expect to find anything.
- The City has notified those three (3) homeowners specifically regarding their test results.
- The City will be replacing the distribution lines that service two (2) of those homes, and if they are found to have lead service lines, those may be replaced as well.
- The City will be undertaking an Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment Program to treat the water with corrosion inhibitors to address our lead joints in our older distribution pipes.
- The City will begin proactively replacing older distribution lines that contain lead service lines as part of an overall Capital Improvement Plan beginning in 2018.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys, and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. 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 by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. 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, which may affect brain development.

Sources of Lead

The primary sources of lead exposure for most children are deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust and lead-contaminated residential soil. Exposure to lead is a significant health concern, especially for young children and infants whose growing bodies tend to absorb more lead than the average adult. **Infants that drink formula prepared with lead-contaminated water are at a greater risk because of the large volume of water they drink relative to their body size.** Lead is rarely found in source water, but enters tap water through corrosion of plumbing materials. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures and solder.

Steps You Can Take To Reduce Your Exposure To Lead In Your Water

If the level of lead found in your drinking water is above 15 ppb or if you are concerned about the lead levels at your location, there are several things you can do:

- **Run your water to flush out lead.** If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water from your kitchen tap or whatever tap you use for drinking and cooking for **at least 3 minutes** and it becomes cold or reaching a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking. This will help flush lead-containing water from the pipes. In order to conserve water, you can fill multiple containers after flushing for drinking, cooking and preparing baby formula.
- **Bottled drinking water should be used by pregnant women, breast-feeding women, young children and formula-fed infants at homes where lead has been detected at levels greater than 15 ppb.**
- **Use cold water for drinking, cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. **Do not** use water from the hot water tap to make baby formula.
- **Do not boil water to remove lead.** Boiling water will not reduce lead.
- **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.**
- **Test your water for lead.** Lead in water test kits are available at hardware stores such as Lowe's and Home Depot.
- **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.** New brass faucets, fittings and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free" may contribute lead to drinking water. As of June 19, 1986, new or replaced water serviced lines and new household plumbing materials could not contain more than 8% lead. Lead content was further reduced on January 4, 2014, when plumbing materials must now be certified as "lead-free" to be used (weighted average of wetted surface cannot be more than 0.25% lead). Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.
- **Check your house service line for lead pipes.** The pipes, most likely located in your basement, would be a dull grey metal that is soft enough to be easily scratched by a house key.

For More Information, call the City of Farmer City's Water and Sewer Superintendent Calvin Florey at (309) 928-3412. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Website at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.

City of Farmer City water system distributed November 2017.