EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities



FACT SHEET FOR PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIERS

As a public water supplier, you perform regular tests to ensure that the water you deliver meets all federal and state standards for lead. However, children may still be at risk from elevated levels of lead in drinking water due to the pipes or plumbing fixtures found in their school and child care facilities. Although most lead exposure occurs when people eat paint chips and inhale dust, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that up to 20% of lead exposure may come from drinking water. Children are extremely vulnerable to the health risks associated with exposure to elevated levels of lead. As children spend a significant portion of their days in a school or child care setting, it is critical to ensure that the drinking water sources in these environments do not contain elevated lead levels.

Lend your expertise to prevent lead contamination and keep our children safe from lead exposure. Partner with your local schools to start a Lead in Drinking Water Control Program.

To help schools safeguard their occupant's health, the EPA developed the ***3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools: Revised Technical Guidance***. The 3Ts – training, testing and telling - provide information schools and child care centers need to: identify potential sources of lead in their facilities, monitor school drinking water for elevated lead levels, resolve problems if elevated lead levels are found, and communicate about their lead control programs.

You can affirm and communicate your utility's commitment to minimizing lead exposure at the tap by partnering with your local schools and child care providers to implement a ***3Ts Program***. Your expertise and collaboration could aid your local schools and child care centers in:

- **Understanding the Source of Lead in Drinking Water**
  As a utility, you may choose to provide information on how lead leaches from facility plumbing, water quality factors affecting the water's corrosivity, or your corrosion control program. Simply providing your Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) may be helpful.
- **Developing a Sampling Plan**
  Most schools and child care facilities are not familiar with water quality sampling. You can inform appropriate school staff about identifying and tracking sample locations, proper timing of sample events, sampling protocols and management of sample results.
- **Conducting Proper Sample Collection**
  You may assist schools and child care facilities in proper sampling protocols to assure correct results. This assistance may include direct participation in training events or a train-the-trainer technical assistance strategy.
- **Analyzing Samples**
  Assistance in this area can take a number of forms, including explaining the appropriate analytical methods, identifying certified laboratories and assisting in selection of laboratory services, or providing analytical services through in-house laboratories.

Effects of Exposure to Lead:
Infants and children exposed to lead can experience: delays in physical and mental development, lower IQ levels, reduced attention span, learning disabilities, hearing loss, hyperactivity, and poor classroom performance.

- **Reviewing Results and Options to Control Lead Exposure**
  As a water supplier, you may have personnel available to interpret sample results and help school decision makers understand identify cost-effective control solutions.

- **Targeting Evaluation Effort**
  In school districts with multiple buildings dedicated to teaching, it may not be immediately possible to sample every location. You may be able to offer support in prioritizing locations by evaluating lead levels in a limited or targeted group of facilities. For example, you might help a school system develop a pilot approach to evaluating its facilities and to identify the characteristics of buildings that make them especially vulnerable to elevated levels of lead in the drinking water.

Potential Sources of Lead in Drinking Water: lead solder; lead pipe and pipe fittings; faucets, valves, meters and other system components containing brass; sediment.

Everyone can play a role in ensuring that schools and child care centers provide safe water for children to drink. Water utilities have established themselves as national leaders in public health. You can help prevent children's exposure to lead in drinking water by partnering with your local schools and child care centers to promote and implement the *3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools.* Collaborative partnerships provide a great opportunity for community involvement in drinking water issues and public health protection.

Here is a list of things to keep in mind before you contact a school/child care facility:

- If an effort is underway, find out who is heading up the effort and work with them
- Make sure your contribution is part of a coordinated effort
- Ensure you've identified the cost and benefits of assistance for your utility
- Identify possible roles for your utility and schools
- Have in mind possible and realistic roles for the school, keeping in mind that they have many competing priorities
- Schools may have complex governance structures—you may need to talk with many parties, including administrators, parents, lawyers, or school boards before moving forward.

DOWNLOAD The *3Ts For Reducing Lead In Drinking Water In Schools: Revised Technical Guidance* at no cost by visiting www.epa.gov/safewater/schools or order a free copy by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 1-800-426-4791.