

Lead in the Drinking Water

First, and foremost, the Jackson Township Municipal Utilities Authority (Authority) would like to reassure our customers that lead has not been an issue in Jackson Township.

But, there has been a lot of publicity in the news recently where water systems are exceeding the 'lead action level of 15 parts per billion'.

Under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines:

- Action level (AL) as the point at which the water supplier must take action to reduce the concentration of a contaminant in the water supply.
- 15 parts per billion (ppb) as the Action Level for lead in the water supply. ('One Part per Billion' is equivalent to one drop of water in one of the largest tanker trucks.)
- 90th Percentile as the value in which the amount of sampling results (90 percent of the sampling points) cannot exceed the ppb.
- Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) as the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. Lead's MCLG is 0.

How do I read the actual lead results in *The 2016 Annual Drinking Water Report for water supplied and tested in the year 2015*?

Inorganic Contaminants

Contaminant	Violation Yes / No	Level Detected	Unit Measurement	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Copper	No	0.4 @ 90th percentile	ppm	1.3	AL = 1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives
Lead	No	2 @ 90th percentile	ppb	0	AL = 15	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits
Nitrates	No	Less than 0.1	ppm	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits

“Lead sampling results for the Jackson Township Municipal water system at 90% of the sampling points, show that lead measures at 2 parts per billion (ppb), which is below the action level of 15 parts per billion.”

How did the Authority determine the lead levels in our water system?

In 2015, 30 samples were collected at various sampling points across the Authority's water system. (Individual test results were sent to the owner at the sampling point.)

- The 30 sample results were then listed in the order of lead levels.
- The first 25 (of the 30) samples collected in the Authority's water system in 2015 indicated that lead was non-detectable.
- At the 90th percentile, which included 27 of the (30) sampling points, the overall lead level was 2 ppb.

What are the 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.

What Are The 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.

Although your home's drinking water lead levels are below the action level, if you are concerned about lead exposure, parents should ask their health care providers about testing children for high levels of lead in the blood.

What Can I Do To Reduce Exposure to Lead in Drinking Water?

- ✓ **Run your water to flush out lead.** If water hasn't been used for several hours, run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
- ✓ **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.**
- ✓ **Do not boil water to remove lead.**
- ✓ **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water.**
- ✓ **Test your water for lead.**
- ✓ **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.**

As always, the Authority will continue to monitor the potable water for all contaminants but we are pleased to report that the drinking water in Jackson Township is safe and of exceptional quality.

If you wish to review actual lead and copper sampling results as published on the NJ-Department of Environmental Protection web site, click [here](#).

To learn more about lead exposure, click [here](#).