



Actions for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Centers

Lead is measured in water in parts per billion (ppb). The Environmental Protection Agency's current action level is 15 ppb, but EPA has proposed lowering the lead action level to 10 ppb. The new action level has not been finalized, but the Rhode Island Department of Health recommends following this lower level. Use this guidance to lower lead levels in your drinking water in your school or child care center. Take action according to the sample result for each faucet tested. **ALL outlets that are used for drinking or food preparation should follow *Routine Prevention and Control Actions* to ensure long-term preservation of water quality.**

Sample Result	Steps to Take
Greater than 10 ppb	<i>Strongly Recommended Actions</i>
Between 1 and 10 ppb	<i>Suggested Actions</i>
Less than 1 ppb (no lead detected)	<i>Routine Prevention and Control Actions</i>

Strongly Recommended Actions

- Do not allow water faucet or drinking fountain to be used for drinking water.
- Post a *Do Not Use* (put both words and pictures on signs) sign on the faucet or drinking fountain, turn it off, or remove it completely.
- In order to return this faucet to use, take *Suggested Actions* below, and then conduct free follow-up testing (details below) to confirm that the remediation actions are successfully lowering the lead levels. If the re-testing results are less than 1 ppb (no lead detected), return the faucet to use. If the re-testing results are 10 ppb or less, return the faucet to use and continue to take *Suggested Actions* to lower lead levels. Follow *Routine Prevention and Control Actions* for all faucets.

Suggested Actions

- Refer to the EPA's *3Ts for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools and Child Care Facilities* that includes information on checking plumbing and taking actions to reduce lead levels. It can be found online at <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2021-07/epa-3ts-guidance-document-english.pdf>
- Flush the pipes to the faucet or drinking fountain (bubbler) each morning before students arrive. Flushing the pipes will get rid of water that has been in the pipes overnight.
 - Water fountains without refrigeration and water faucets should be run for 30 seconds to one minute until the water is noticeably colder.
 - Water fountains with refrigeration should be run for 15 minutes.
- Remove and clean, or replace, faucet aerators.
- Consider replacing faucets or water fountains with a lead-free, NSF-approved fixture. You can find approved fixtures online at <https://info.nsf.org/Certified/PwsComponents/index.asp?standard=061> Contact the project coordinator (Emma.Shipley.CTR@health.ri.gov) for information about no cost or low-cost lead-reducing replacement fixtures.
- Follow-up testing is important after remediation actions are completed. Free re-testing of remediated fixtures will be available to help verify the success of remediation activities. Please contact Lisa Philo (lphilo@uri.edu) or Emma Shipley (Emma.Shipley.CTR@health.ri.gov) to set up re-testing sampling. Please note, re-testing

will NOT be performed for fixtures where the remediation action was to permanently shut off, remove, or disconnect the fixture.

Routine Prevention and Control Actions

- Create and implement aerator cleaning schedules for all water faucets so that debris can be removed.
- Use only cold water for food preparation and drinking. Hot water dissolves lead faster than cold water.
- Flush faucets and drinking fountains regularly, especially after weekends, vacations, or long periods of inactivity. Instructions for flushing pipes can be found in the section above.
- Post signs in bathrooms that water from the sink faucets should not be used for drinking water. Put both words and pictures on signs.
- If lead is detected in any of your water samples, consider testing *all* faucets and drinking fountains on a regular basis.

Additional Resources

- <http://web.uri.edu/nemo/lead-in-water>
- <https://health.ri.gov/water/about/lead/>