

Evaluating Your Data

All sample results will be placed into one of three bins.

- Bin 1—Above 15.0 micrograms per Liter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$)
- Bin 2—5.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ to 15.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$
- Bin 3—Below 5.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$

The follow-up actions will depend on the bin placement. Actions may include:

- Bin 1—Immediately discontinue use of the affected fixture.
- Bin 2—Evaluate the conditions at affected fixtures and determine appropriate remedial action.
- Bin 3—No remedial action is required, conduct routine sampling.

Sampling Grant Program

A grant program has been created to pay for the cost of the laboratory analysis of the water samples, as funding allows. The grant program is only available to public schools. Contact DEQ for details.

Existing Public Water System

If your school is classified as a public water system (PWS), this required sampling is separate from your required Lead and Copper sampling under 40 CFR 141.80.



All sample results will be available to the public on DEQ's website, along with additional information, guidance, documents, forms and templates.

DEQ.MT.GOV/LEAD

For general questions or comments regarding the rules and requirements please contact:



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Lead in School Drinking Water
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Additional health information on lead can be found on the following websites:
USA EPA epa.gov/lead
and CDC cdc.gov/nceh/lead/



Lead Reduction in Schools

Drinking Water Program



Drinking Water Program

The Lead Reduction in Schools Drinking Water Rule* was enacted to protect children by minimizing lead levels in drinking water at schools. Children are especially susceptible to lead exposure and spend a large amount of their time in schools. It is therefore extremely important that schools are providing safe drinking water. The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) revised new school requirements and is partnering with Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to provide sampling and remediation technical assistance to schools.

The requirements for all schools accredited by the Montana Board of Public Education are as follows:

- Sample all water fountains and sinks used for food preparation. All other potential human consumption fixtures (HCF) must also be sampled, unless the school or school district submits a testing plan to DEQ to test a representative sample of potential HCFs in the school. Schools will have until December 31, 2021 to complete the initial sampling.
- Create and maintain a simple schematic (layout) and inventory of plumbing materials, all fixtures and those that are used for human consumption.
- Create and implement a water flushing plan.
- Conduct follow-up actions as required based on the results of the sampling.
- Conduct routine sampling as required following the initial sampling event.

DEQ will provide assistance and guidance documents to help schools comply with these requirements.

*ARM 37.111.832 (8), Effective January 17, 2020

Health Effects of Lead in Children

Children are especially susceptible to lead exposure because their bodies absorb the metal at higher rates than the average adult. Children younger than six years old are the most at risk due to their rapid growth rate. Exposure to lead can cause damage to the brain, red blood cells and kidneys. Exposure to even low levels of lead can cause reduced IQ, hearing impairment, reduced attention span and poor classroom performance.



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How Lead Enters Your Water

Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of corrosion—the wearing away of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and facility plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipe, brass and chrome-plated brass faucets, and in some cases pipes made of lead that connect facilities to water mains (service lines).

Lead is more likely to enter drinking water when water is stagnant in lead pipes or plumbing systems containing lead for several hours or more. Schools can be particularly susceptible to higher lead concentrations due to their extended periods of no water use (e.g. holidays, weekends, and winter/spring/summer breaks).

Flushing your water system is a simple, inexpensive and very effective measure to ensure water quality is preserved. Flushing involves running your cold water taps for a short period of time to remove the stagnant water. Schools should create a flushing plan and make it part of routine maintenance. It is also a good practice to perform flushing at home as well.

Sample Collection

- Prior to testing, the schools's inventory and layout must be submitted and approved by DEQ. Requirements can be found on the DEQ website.
- Contact a Montana certified water laboratory (listed on the DEQ website) and request sample container(s) for analysis for Lead in Schools. The laboratory will send you the appropriate sample containers (250 milliliter plastic bottles) and paper work.
- Must be first draw sample. Samples must be collected after the water has had time to sit in the pipes for at least 6 but not more than 18 hours. Typically, early morning is the best time to collect the samples.
- Place the opened sample container beneath the fixture and gently open the cold water tap. Do not sample from the hot water tap. Fill the container to the fill line or to the top depending on the type of container.
- Fill out the included paperwork and send the samples to a Montana certified laboratory.
- Samples can be collected by anyone with just minimal training.