



## **Public Advisory for Drinking Water Customers in the City of Birmingham**

October 7, 2019

The Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act has changed to better protect your health. New water sampling rules have been added to better detect possible lead in your drinking water. These changes require communities with lead service lines to do more sampling. This new sampling method is expected to result in higher lead results, not because the water source or quality for residents has changed, but because the Act has more stringent sampling procedures and analysis.

The City of Birmingham has been conducting testing of tap water in homes with lead service lines for lead and copper in accordance with this Act since 1992.

In September 2019, the City collected samples from 32 sites with known lead service leads out of approximately 8,870 total water customers in the city. Of the 8,870 water customers there are approximately 6% (roughly 550 customers) with lead service leads. Five (5) of the thirty-two (32) targeted sites tested exceeded the Action Level of 15 ppb (parts per billion). The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy or EGLE (formally the MDEQ) evaluates compliance with the Action Level based on the 90th percentile of all lead and copper results collected in each round of sampling. As a result of testing under this new method, the lead 90th percentile for the City of Birmingham water supply is 17 parts per billion (ppb), which exceeds the Action Level of 15 ppb. This does not mean every customer has elevated lead levels. An Action Level exceedance means that more than 10% of the samples tested under the new testing method have elevated lead levels. The City had five (5) of the targeted thirty-two (32) sites with known lead service leads report elevated lead results.

The "Action Level" is not a health-based standard, but it is a level that triggers additional actions including, but not limited to, increased investigative sampling of water quality and educational outreach to customers. This is NOT a violation of the Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act. Because five (5) sites were over the Action Level for lead, the City of Birmingham would like to share some ways you can reduce your exposure to lead since lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water and other sources.

Below are some recommended actions to help reduce lead exposure. Lead can enter drinking water when in contact with pipes, solder, home/building interior plumbing, fittings and fixtures that contain lead. Homes with lead service lines have an increased risk of having high lead levels in drinking water. The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain. Therefore, if your water has not been used for several hours, run the water before using it for drinking or cooking. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes. Additional flushing may be required for homes that have been vacant or have a longer service line.

- **Run your water to flush out lead-containing water.**
  - If you **do not** have a lead service line, run the water for 30 seconds to two minutes, or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature.
  - If you **do** have a lead service line, run the water for at least five minutes to flush water from the plumbing of your home and the lead service line.
- **Consider using a filter to reduce lead in drinking water. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services recommends that any household with an infant, young child, or pregnant woman use a certified lead filter to remove lead from their drinking water.**
  - Look for filters that are tested and certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for lead reduction.
  - Be sure to maintain and replace the filter device in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions to protect water quality.
  - If your household has a child or pregnant woman and are not able to afford the cost of a lead filter, the Oakland County Health Department will be at Birmingham City Hall in room 202 on Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 4pm to 7pm to provide one lead filter at no cost for those that qualify.
- **Use cold water for drinking, cooking, or preparing baby formula.**
- **Do not boil** your water as boiling will not reduce the amount of lead in water.
- Clean your faucet aerator to remove trapped debris.
- Check whether your home has a lead service line. You can contact the City's Engineering Department at (248) 530-1840 for this information.
- Anyone with health-related questions can contact the Oakland County Nurse on Call at (800) 848-5533 or noc@oakgov.com.

As part of the State's compliance requirements, the City of Birmingham will soon provide a comprehensive public education document with further information about lead in drinking water. We will be collecting sixty (60) samples every six (6) months and reviewing the results to determine if corrective actions are necessary to reduce corrosion in household plumbing.

If you are a Birmingham water customer and have or think you may have a lead service line to your home and would like to verify your water service line, you can contact the City's Engineering Department at (248) 530-1840. To have your drinking water tested for lead, you can contact EGLE for a list of laboratories certified for lead and copper testing or visit their website at [www.michigan.gov/EGLElab](http://www.michigan.gov/EGLElab).

Additional information regarding the new regulations and lead safety can be found on the City of Birmingham's website at: [www.bhamgov.org/leadtesting](http://www.bhamgov.org/leadtesting) or on the EGLE website at: [www.michigan.gov/degleadpublicadvisory](http://www.michigan.gov/degleadpublicadvisory) or [www.michigan.gov/MILeadSafe](http://www.michigan.gov/MILeadSafe).

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.