



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF WATER AND SEWER UTILITIES

DWSU Lead and Copper Monitoring Summary

In 1993, the Division of Water and Sewer Utilities (DWSU) began monitoring under the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule at all of our water systems. The Lead and Copper Rule is a comprehensive monitoring program that requires first-draw sampling directly from consumer taps. Depending upon results, systems may be required to install corrosion control treatment, replace lead service lines, and/or deliver public education programs designed to reduce the consumer's exposure to lead and copper in drinking water.

Water is typically lead-free when it leaves the treatment plant, but lead may be introduced when it comes into contact with the privately-owned and maintained household plumbing containing lead.

To comply with the Lead and Copper Rule, the County's water systems were required to annually sample between 5 to 30 sites, which is based on the size of the water system. Specific sample locations were chosen based on surveys sent to all residents. Homes constructed before 1986 were preferentially selected because they were constructed prior to the lead solder ban.

Sampling is performed by the homeowner. Samples must be a first-draw sample from a tap typically used for drinking and cooking and undisturbed for a minimum of 6 hours. Typically, this is sufficient time for lead, if present, to dissolve and be detected in our analysis. Because it is logistically difficult to have DWSU staff collect these samples, homeowners are provided detailed instructions on proper sample collection and are required to document and sign a detailed sample collection form.

Each system's compliance is based upon 90% of all sample results being below the EPA Action Level for lead, which is 15 µg/l (ppb), and copper which is 1.3 mg/l (ppm).

Since monitoring began in 1993, Frederick County drinking water systems have been in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule. After 1996, most of our systems began reduced monitoring that only requires triennial monitoring for Lead and Copper. Testing for our systems was last completed in 2017.

While the DWSU has been fortunate that there are no publicly-owned residential lead service lines on our systems and that many residences were constructed after the 1986 lead solder ban; nevertheless, the DWSU knows that many homes may have lead solder

used in their plumbing or have brass faucets, fittings, and valves installed. Brass fixtures constructed prior to 2014 can contain up to 8% lead.

To minimize exposure to the consumer, the DWSU closely monitors water chemistry data and calculates corrosivity indices. Where necessary, some systems have had corrosion control treatment systems installed.

Each year in accordance with state and federal EPA regulations, the DWSU distributes an [Annual Water Quality Report or Consumer Confidence Report](#) that contains the results of our most recent Lead and Copper test results, as well as many other water quality parameters from the previous calendar year. Other parameters including metals, fluoride, chlorine, and disinfection byproducts appear in the report if found at detectable concentrations. In addition, each report contains precautionary statements regarding lead in drinking water that warn of the health effects of lead and what can be done to minimize exposure.

There are several simple things that a homeowners can do to minimize their lead exposure:

- Always flush water lines for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking.
- Drink or cook with only water from the cold water faucet. Warm or hot water may contain more lead. Boiling water will not reduce the amount of lead in water.
- Periodically inspect or clean the aerator on the end of the faucet to remove debris or metal particles that may have accumulated.

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Additional questions may be directed to the Department of Water Purification and Distribution by telephone at (301) 600-1825 or via email at WSOps@frederickcountymd.gov.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Resources:

Safe Drinking Water Act Hotline: (800) 426-4791

EPA Lead Information Webpage
www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water