

## **Lead in Drinking Water: Questions and Answers**

**How does lead get in drinking water?** Lead can get into the water by being present in the water source, such as coming from contaminated runoff or water pollution, or through an interaction between the water and plumbing materials containing lead, such as through corrosion.

**Are schools currently required to test their water?** No, it is not mandated for schools receiving water from municipal systems.

**Why are there signs that say, run water for at least 30 seconds, above drinking fountains?** This is a precautionary measure recommended by the EPA. The interior of faucets could be a source of lead, so running the water for a minimum of 30 seconds prior to drinking it, decreases the potential for exposure.

**What is the threshold for action to be taken by schools?** According to the EPA most sources of drinking water have no lead or very low levels of lead (i.e., under 5 parts per billion). If water fountains or other outlets used for consumption have lead levels exceeding 15 parts per billion, they should be treated for corrosion control or taken out of service.

**Where does Red Jacket's water come from?** Canandaigua Lake

**Who is our water supplier and can I view the Annual Water Quality Report?** Newark is our supplier and the water quality report can be viewed at [www.villageofnewark.com](http://www.villageofnewark.com), click on Village Departments and then Water Treatment Plant.

**Even though water testing is currently NOT required by schools, does Red Jacket have plans to test their water?** Yes. The Manchester-Shortsville Central School District is currently undergoing the State required Building Condition Survey (BCS), which will include developing a plumbing profile for each building and conducting comprehensive water testing of all consumption areas first (i.e., drinking fountains, kitchen sinks), hygiene areas (i.e., showers) and then non-consumption areas (i.e., utility and restroom sinks) by a Certified Independent Environmental Testing Agency. Testing will occur this summer.

### **What is Red Jacket doing as a precautionary measure in the meantime?**

In the short term, we began implementing the following routine control measures recommended by the EPA to err on the side of safety even though testing has not yet begun:

- 1) We have created an aerator (screen) cleaning maintenance schedule to clean debris from all accessible aerators.
- 2) We will only use cold water for food and beverage preparation. If hot water is needed, it will be taken from the cold tap water and heated on a stove or in a microwave oven. Hot water is likely to contain increased lead levels if lead is present.
- 3) We have asked staff and students to run the water for at least 30 seconds before drinking it as a safety precaution. The interior of faucets are often a source of lead, so running the water for a minimum of 30 seconds prior to drinking it, decreases the potential for exposure.
- 4) Restroom sinks will contain placards with notices that water should not be consumed.
- 5) A flushing program may be implemented if we determine there is a localized problem in an area where water is consumed. "Flushing" involves opening suspect taps every morning before the facility opens and letting the water run to remove water that has been standing in the interior pipes or outlets.
- 6) If sample results from an outlet exceed 15 ppb, we will shut off problem outlets until the problem is resolved.
- 7) We will keep the public informed on our website at [www.redjacket.org](http://www.redjacket.org) as we learn more information.

### **What will we do for a permanent remedy if necessary?**

If test results warrant, we will continue using precautionary measures and take further action, such as treatment for corrosion control or taking water outlets for consumption out of service, until replacement of pipes, fittings, fixtures, etc., can occur. If it is determined large scale work is required to remedy the problem, it will be a priority need going into our next capital improvement project. The capital project will allow us to take advantage of State Aid to meet industry and NSF International Standard 61 (sections 4, 8, and 9), which includes replacing pipes, fittings, drinking water storage devices, tubing, hoses, screens, water meters, valves, meter stops, backflow preventers, faucets, water dispensers,

fountains, ice makers, supply stops, and endpoint control valves, as needed, with the goal of permanently eliminating any sources of lead in drinking water and eliminate or reduce other non-consumable sources of lead that originate in our school plumbing.

**Could there be lead in my water at home?** Yes. Most lead gets into drinking water after the water leaves the local well or treatment plant and comes into contact with plumbing materials containing lead. These include lead pipe and lead solder (commonly used until 1986) as well as faucets, valves, and other components made of brass. The physical/chemical interaction that occurs between the water and plumbing is referred to as corrosion. The extent to which corrosion occurs contributes to the amount of lead that can be released into the drinking water. The corrosion of lead tends to occur more frequently in “soft” water (i.e., water that lathers soap easily) and acidic (low pH) water. Home water testing is important.

The safety and the welfare of our students, staff, and public is our priority at Red Jacket. Please keep in mind the measures we are currently taking at Red Jacket are precautionary measures.