

MPU's Water is Safe

MPU is paying close attention to what unfolded in Flint, MI and our thoughts are with those who are struggling without access to safe water in their homes. At MPU our focus is to protect the families we serve and our employees are committed to protecting public health through safe and reliable water.

Lead is not found in Manitowoc's source water (Lake Michigan) or the treatment plant. Lead comes from the water service lines running between the water main in the street and the home, and from plumbing inside the home. When water stands for several hours in fixtures or pipes containing lead, the lead may leach into the water. It's possible a physical disruption of the piping may release lead into the water.

The kind of incident that happened in Flint, MI is unlikely to happen in the Manitowoc water system. Since mid-1990's, MPU has safely treated its water with ortho-phosphate to reduce the risk of lead leaching from plumbing materials into water. This compound forms a protective coating inside pipes and is considered to be the best practice for the control of lead in drinking water.

However, some homes are more at risk for lead in drinking water due to characteristics of the plumbing at the individual residence. As required by the EPA, MPU conducts lead and copper sampling monitoring every three years at several different locations which provide a representative sample of our system. This monitoring is based on MPU's continued compliance with the EPA regulations since the mid-1990s. Reports for the lead and copper levels can be found on the WDNR website. You can be assured that MPU is compliant with the EPA Lead and Copper Rule.

More Information

For more tips and information on drinking water safety and lead, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm>

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>

If you have questions about lead in drinking water call MPU at (920) 683-4600. Or if you have questions about lead testing or the health effects, contact the Manitowoc County Health Department at (920) 683-4155.

Contact Us

Online

www.mpu.org

Customer Service

920-683-4600

mpucustomerservice@mpu.org

Report an Outage

Electric: 920-683-4622

Water: 920-683-4633

Diggers Hotline

Quick Dial: 8-1-1

Toll Free: 1-800-242-8511

Emergency: 1-877-500-9592

Address

Main Office

1303 S. 8th Street

Manitowoc, WI 54220

Mailings

Office

PO Box 1090

Manitowoc, WI 54220

Customer Service

PO Box 1087

Manitowoc, WI 54220

Office Hours

Monday - Friday: 8am-4:30pm

Lead Awareness and Drinking Water Safety

February 2017

News from Manitowoc Public Utilities



Manitowoc Public Utilities
*Dedicated to providing
customer-focused utility services*

Is Your Home At-Risk?

Lead used in service lines and interior plumbing could be a health concern. Manitowoc Public Utilities takes measures to prevent leaching from lead plumbing materials into your water. Older homes may be more at risk than others. A licensed plumber or home inspector could be hired to inspect the service line or interior plumbing for presence of lead pipes, lead solder, or lead fixtures.

The following conditions will help determine if your home is at-risk for lead plumbing.

- Lead pipes are dull gray in color and are soft enough to be scratched with a house key.
- Homes with copper pipes built before 1987 may have used lead solder joints. Lead solder was banned after this time.
- Since January 1, 2014, only lead-free fixtures and fittings are allowed to be installed or used to repair drinking water plumbing. Plumbing and fixtures installed before these dates or purchased from sources outside of the US may contain lead.
- About 6,500 water services to homes constructed in Manitowoc before 1947 could have used lead pipes in part of the water service. The lead pipe may appear in the basement where the service enters the building, but could be hidden in the street.

Lead and My Health

Lead can be found in many products and locations. The most common source is dust and chips from lead based paint used in toys, furniture, and older homes.

Lead absorbed by the lungs and the digestive tract enter the bloodstream, where it distributes to all tissues of the body. Excessive levels of lead can damage the brain, kidneys, nervous system, red blood cells and reproductive system. Young children, infants, and fetuses appear to be most vulnerable.

The degree of harm is directly related to the level of lead in the blood. Some harmful effects are reversible if exposure is reduced, while other harmful effects can be permanent.

Easy Steps to Reduce the Risk of Lead in Your Drinking Water

There are several easy things you can do to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water. These actions are particularly important if pregnant or breastfeeding women or children under the age of six live in your home.

- **Flush your plumbing.** Before using tap water for drinking or cooking, flush your plumbing by running the kitchen faucet (or any other tap you take drinking or cooking water from) on cold for a minimum of 3 minutes, and longer if necessary, until the water stream is noticeably colder. This is especially important if your water has been sitting in your pipes for more than six hours. Showering, doing laundry and flushing the toilet all help clear water from the pipes. Bathing, showering and doing laundry in water from lead service lines or lead plumbing is safe. To conserve water, you can reserve the flushed water and use for watering household plants or outdoor plants. You may also want to consider filling a clean container(s) with water from the flushed tap, and reserving this water for drinking, cooking, or other consumption.
- **Use only cold water for cooking and drinking.** Water from the hot water tap can dissolve lead more easily than cold water. Boiling water will not reduce the amount of lead in your drinking or cooking water. In fact, boiling can concentrate the lead in water. You can also consider, if desired, purchasing bottled water from a known lead-free source for drinking and cooking.
- **Inspect your aerator.** The aerator on the end of your faucet is a screen that can catch debris, including particles of lead. It's suggested to periodically remove the aerator and rinse out any debris.
- **Purchase a home filtration system.** Home drinking water filtration systems or water filtering pitchers can reduce or eliminate lead. Be sure to look for products certified by NSF/ANSI under Standard 53 for removal of lead and follow any manufacturer's guidelines on installation and maintenance of the product. Find a list of products at www.nsf.org or on the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services Website: http://dsps.wi.gov/php/sb-ppalopp/contam_alpha_list.php.
- **Replace your Home lead service line or interior plumbing.** Lead pipe is shiny when scraped with a screwdriver, and a magnet will not stick to it. (Galvanized steel pipe is dull when scraped and a magnet will stick to it.) Replacement must be done by a licensed plumber under contract from the homeowner.

In addition, the CDC recommends all children under the age of six be tested at least once for lead poisoning. Pregnant or breastfeeding women at risk for lead poisoning should also be tested for lead in their blood. Lead has no beneficial role in the body and there is no minimum lead level that does not cause effects. Most lead poisoned people do not look or act sick. The Manitowoc County Health Department recommends that children who are at risk for lead poisoning should be tested at age one and age two. Children up to age 6 should have a blood lead test if there is no record of a previous test. Risks for lead poisoning include living in or frequent visits to a house built prior to 1978 or having a sibling or playmate diagnosed with lead poisoning. Pregnant or breastfeeding women who were exposed to lead at an early age or are at risk of lead exposure due to their environment, occupation, or hobbies should also get tested. Testing is available at your doctor's office or at the Manitowoc County Health Department.