

Education and Communication Toolkit: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water

This toolkit provides resources to:

1. Assist school district and charter school staff, school board members, parents, legislators, consultants and other affected and interested audiences in becoming educated regarding the requirements of lead legislation. The legislation requires public school districts and charter schools serving students from kindergarten through grade 12 to accurately and efficiently test for the presence of lead in water and report the results of this testing.
2. Assist those assigned with communicating the results to parents, guardians, and the public. It includes easy-to-use communication templates, resources, and tips. Communication should be timely. If a test reveals the presence of lead at or above 5 parts per billion (ppb), the school district or charter school must, within 30 days of receiving the test result, either remediate the presence of lead to below 5 ppb, verified by retest, or directly notify parents of the test result.

NOTE: You may want to consider translating pertinent documents as needed. Please follow your translation policy.

Key Messages

- There is no safe level of lead so reducing all sources is important.
- Schools must test for the presence of lead at all taps used for drinking and cooking.
- It's important for parents and guardians to know about their school's lead testing results, therefore schools must communicate results.
- Schools must implement recommended strategies to reduce lead in drinking water.
- Final decisions on specific interventions to reduce lead exposure in individual facilities are made by local school districts based on guidance from MDH and MDE, and
- MDH encourages some level of response be taken for any plumbing fixtures identified as producing a detectable level of lead. Best management practices should continue until subsequent testing indicates lead has been reduced to below 5 ppb.

Background and Informational Resources

Minnesota Statute Regarding Lead in School Drinking Water

- [Lead in School Drinking Water \(https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.335\)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.335)

Full Technical Guidance and Model Plan

- [Reducing Lead in Drinking Water \(PDF\) \(http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/pbschoolguide.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/pbschoolguide.pdf)

MDH Program Summary Flyer

- [Lead in Drinking Water in Early Care and Educational Settings \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/careeducation.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/careeducation.pdf>)

Talking Points for School Leaders

- [Testing for Lead in School Drinking Water \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/talkpoints.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/talkpoints.pdf>)

Communication Tools

The following are resources specific to the Technical Guidance and Model Plan prepared to assist you with informing a variety of audiences. When lead results are elevated, communicating test results should occur within 30 days of receipt of results or after remediation steps have been taken.

INSTRUCTIONS: The letter/press release/newsletter templates have been formatted to allow for personalization. They are offered as examples of potential content you may want to consider as you communicate results/inform parents, etc. You can adjust, delete, or copy and paste any text to fit your needs. Once completed, add your own title, letterhead/logo, delete the instructions, and save the template with your information for distribution.

Sample planning checklist

- [Model Plan Checklist \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/planchlist.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/planchlist.docx>)

Sample letters to parents and staff

Sample letter #1: Longer format; General discussion

- [Sample letter #1 \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr1.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr1.docx>)

Sample letter #2: Shorter format; Focused on specific results

- [Sample letter #2](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr2.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr2.docx>)

Additional text/items to consider

- Although our school district/charter school is taking reasonable steps to reduce lead exposure, there is no safe level of lead. Parents can take further steps at home to reduce exposure. For more information see: [MDH Lead Program](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html>).
- If your school district cannot immediately remedy elevated lead levels, we encourage you to send communication about results without delay. In that case, we suggest describing the reason for the delay in implementing a permanent solution and the

interim measures you will take to provide safe drinking water until the problem can be addressed.

Sample news article

- [Sample newsletter \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/samplenewsltr.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/samplenewsltr.docx>)

Sample press release

- [Sample press release \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleprssrelse.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleprssrelse.docx>)

Sample school webpage

- [St. Paul Public Schools \(https://www.spps.org/about/departments/facilities/health-and-safety/lead-in-water-results\)](https://www.spps.org/about/departments/facilities/health-and-safety/lead-in-water-results)
- [Minneapolis Public Schools \(https://www.mpschools.org/departments/operations/environmental-health-safety\)](https://www.mpschools.org/departments/operations/environmental-health-safety)

Other Ideas to Consider

- Use Key Messages when developing social media messages.
- Develop a contact list of local resources: public health agencies, public water systems, and other available resources.
- Include information about lead testing and communication requirements in the list of required annual notifications sent to parents (Asbestos, Pesticide, Indoor Air Quality, and other notices).
- Plan to refer questions about health concerns to healthcare providers.

General Resources

The following are general resources you may find helpful (i.e., not specific to new legislation).

Lead Flyers

- [Reducing Lead in School Drinking Water webpage \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/schools/reducelead.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/schools/reducelead.html)
- [Types Of Actions That Can Be Taken When Results For Lead Are Elevated \(PDF\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/typeaction.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/typeaction.pdf)
- [Actions At Every Level \(PDF\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/schoolwater.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/schoolwater.pdf)

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT: REDUCING LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

Lead Bookmark and Signs

- [Water: Get the Lead Out \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/leadbkmrk.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/leadbkmrk.pdf>)
- [Do Not Drink Signs \(PDF\)](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/donotdrinksigns_lead.pdf)
(https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/lead/docs/donotdrinksigns_lead.pdf)

Tips and Resources for Parents

- [MDH Lead Program](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html>)

Risk Communication Information

- [Risk Communication Summary \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/riskcomm.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/riskcomm.pdf>)
- [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/publications_risk_comm.html)
(https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/publications_risk_comm.html)

Environmental Protection Agency Lead Manual

- [Environmental Health Protection Agency Lead Manual](https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit)
(<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit>)

Contact Information

Minnesota Department of Education
Division of School Finance | Long-Term Facilities Maintenance
651-582-8779
mde.funding@state.mn.us
[Minnesota Department of Education](https://www.health.state.mn.us)

Minnesota Department of Health
Environmental Health Division | Drinking Water Protection
651-201-4700
HEALTH.WIIN_Grant@state.mn.us
www.health.state.mn.us

October 2024

To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4700.