

Education and Communication Toolkit: Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Child Care Settings

This toolkit provides resources to assist those assigned with communicating lead in drinking water results to the public including parents and guardians. It includes easy-to-use communication templates, resources, and tips.

Communication should be timely. Within 30 days of receiving the results, child care centers are required to notify families and staff about the results and any remediation steps taken. Staff and families must also be notified annually of where they can find the lead in drinking water results and remediation information.

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;
- It is **required** that child care centers test for the presence of lead at all taps used for drinking and cooking. It is recommended that other types of child care settings test as well;
- It is important for parents and guardians to know about their child care setting's lead testing results;
- Whenever lead is found in drinking water, steps should be taken to reduce exposure. Child care settings 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 child care setting owners/operators based on guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Environmental Protection Agency; 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 parts per billion (ppb).

Background and Informational Resources

Minnesota Statute Regarding Testing for Lead in Drinking Water in Child Care Settings

- [Sec. 145.9273 MN Statutes \(https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/145.9273\)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/145.9273)

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)

Fact Sheet for Child Care Settings

- [Lead in Drinking Water in Child Care Settings \(PDF\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/contaminants/lead.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/contaminants/lead.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. Child care centers are required to communicate test results within 30 days of receipt of results. MDH recommends other facilities that test for lead in drinking water communicate results within 30 days or as soon as practical.

INSTRUCTIONS: The letter 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 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/sampleltr1cc.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr1cc.docx>)

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

- [Sample letter #2](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr2cc.docx)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/docs/sampleltr2cc.docx>)

Additional text/items to consider

- Although our facility 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 facility 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.

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.
- 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

- [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>)

EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT: REDUCING LEAD IN DRINKING WATER IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS

- [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>)

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>)

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