

Where Does Your Water Come From?

Public water suppliers (PWS) collect water from waterbodies (lakes, ponds, rivers) or underground wells, treat it to remove any contaminants, and then pump it through a system of pipes to arrive at your facility. Public water suppliers are regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and are required to test for contaminants in drinking water.

Why Also Test Your Water?

Although the public water supplier tests the water, certain contaminants like **lead and copper** can enter your water through your internal plumbing that contains these metals, such as the water pipe leading into your facility or the pipes/fixtures in your facility. Therefore, MassDEP advises facilities to test for lead and copper at their tap.

How to Test Your Water

Laboratories can test your water. In most cases, the laboratory can arrange to collect your water samples. You can also obtain the necessary bottles and collect your own samples. It is important that you understand the sampling process in order to get useful and accurate results.

MassDEP recommends using a state certified laboratory- and your local Board of Health may require it.

Drinking Water Guidance

This MassDEP guidance is intended to assist early education and care facilities (EECFs) in complying with drinking water standards recommended for licensing or re-licensing by the Department of Early Education and Care. It applies to EECFs served by a public water supplier who is responsible for the source of the water (i.e., not a private well).



**Drinking Water
Guidance for Early
Education and Care
Facilities Connected to
a Public Water System**



In Addition to the Testing Done by your PWS, What is the Other Recommended Testing and Scheduled?

MassDEP recommends testing for lead and copper at the frequency and locations listed below.

Contaminants	Frequency	Collection Locations
Lead and Copper	Minimum of once every 3 years or whenever there are plumbing changes	Taps/fixtures used for drinking, cooking, and medical purposes. Typically, kitchen and bathroom sinks.

Contact your local Board of Health for further testing requirements. To find your local Board of Health see <https://mhoa.com/municipal-links/>.

List of Public Water Suppliers:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/public-water-suppliers-contact-spreadsheet-rev-june-2020/download>.



Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Water Resources
Drinking Water Program

What Should I Do If the Test Results Find Elevated Levels of Lead or Copper?

The presence of a contaminant does not necessarily mean that the water is unsafe. However, when levels exceed state or federal health standards, you may need to take steps to correct the situation. If you find levels of lead above one (1) part per billion (ppb) or copper above 1,300 ppb at any tap/fixture, MassDEP recommends the following actions:

- Test your water at the elevated tap again, this time after flushing it first, to help identify the source.
- Identify and replace plumbing fixtures/plumbing containing excessive amounts of lead or copper with those free of the metals.
- Some faucet and pitcher filters can remove lead and copper from drinking water. If you use a filter, be sure you get one that is certified to remove them by the NSF International and replace filters per manufacturer's directions.

You may also contact our technical assistance partner UMass-Amherst at lccadep@umass.edu or 413-545-0840.

To see if your facility might be at risk of lead contamination visit:
<https://cfpub.epa.gov/safewater/leaddecision/>

“Remember to use only cold, fresh water to prepare food and beverages”

Run the water first thing in the morning or after periods of low or no flow to flush and clear out water that has been standing in the plumbing overnight. See Flushing information at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/lead-and-copper-best-practices/download>

Other Sources of Lead

While drinking water can be an important contributing source of overall exposure, lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust are the primary sources of exposure for children. Lead can also be found in some handmade pottery and imported cookware, home remedies, toys, candy, jewelry, and canned food.

Additional Resources

- US EPA's guidance for EECFs: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit>
- MassDEP information on lead in drinking water at EECFs: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/sampling-for-lead-and-copper-at-schools-and-childcare-facilities>
- MA Department of Public Health information on lead: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program>
- A searchable list of MassDEP certified labs: <https://eeonline.eea.state.ma.us/DEP/Labcert/Labcert.aspx>.