



Reducing Lead and Copper in School and Child Care Facility Drinking Water Before Re-Opening

Important information for schools and child care facilities



When facilities are closed or partially closed, water sitting stagnant in pipes and fixtures can allow lead and copper to leach into it. Before re-opening any facility, it is important to follow these steps to bring fresh water into the building and reduce any levels of copper and lead in drinking water.

Building Flushing

MassDEP recommends flushing ALL drinking water pipes and fixtures before re-opening.

FLUSHING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Locate the faucet farthest away from the service line on each wing and floor of the building, open the faucets wide, and let the cold water run for 10 minutes. This time frame is considered adequate for most buildings. For best results, calculate the volume of the plumbing and the flow rate at the tap and adjust the flushing time accordingly.
2. Run all drinking water fountains: those without refrigeration units for 30-60 seconds or until cold and those with refrigeration units for 15 minutes.
3. Open all kitchen faucets (and other faucets where water will be used for drinking and/or cooking) and let the water run for 30-60 seconds or until cold.

Remember that each drinking water fixture should be flushed individually; flushing a toilet will not flush your water fountains. All flushing should be recorded in a log that is kept in the office, or by the person in charge of it.

For more information visit:

www.mass.gov/doc/massdep-building-flushing-information/download

Use of Classroom Faucets and Water Fountains

It is likely that children who attend in-person school will spend more time in their classrooms due to concerns about COVID-19. This may increase the use of classroom faucets and water fountains for drinking. These can also be sources of lead and copper. Prior to use, MassDEP recommends the following:

1. Determine if the fixtures have been tested for lead and copper. Results may be found at: <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/portal#!/search/leadandcopper>
2. If no testing was done OR the testing results show levels of lead over 1 part per billion (ppb) and the fixture hasn't been remediated or isn't part of a flushing program, MassDEP recommends placing a "For Hand Washing Only" sign at the fixture and not using the water for drinking.
4. Whether testing was done or not, all faucets and fountains should be run for 30-60 seconds before their first use each day.
5. Between each use or at the end of each day, follow recommended cleaning requirements from health and school officials.



If you have any questions, contact the MassDEP Drinking Water Program at program.director-dwp@mass.gov or call 617-292-5570.

Additional Information



How is drinking water at your facility regulated and who is responsible for testing for lead and copper?

The drinking water at your facility is regulated depending on the source of your water and how many children and adults it serves. The vast majority of schools and child care facilities are served by a public water system or PWS (e.g. municipal source), which is regulated by MassDEP. MassDEP requires that a PWS serving schools sample two of them for lead and copper on a specific schedule. Testing at additional schools served by a PWS and any facility not served by a PWS is done on a voluntary basis unless the facility has its own water source and MassDEP regulates it as a PWS.

What can you do?

1. Take advantage of the assistance programs
2. Become educated about the issue/tell others

Within Your Facility

- ♦ Develop a list/map of all of the fixtures used for drinking water, to prepare food and/or beverages, and in nurses' offices. All others should be posted "For hand washing only".
- ♦ Use the MassDEP online **LCCA Program Management Tool** to maintain and track the status of all identified sites. By using the tool, facilities can manage their sampling sites, analytical data, and remediation actions.
- ♦ Develop and implement a **Sampling Plan** and use a **Massachusetts' certified laboratory** to analyze all samples.
- ♦ **Remove, remediate** and **retest** all taps/fixtures to confirm they are safe before returning to service using guidance from the US Environmental Protection Agency below.
- ♦ Develop a **communication plan** that provides timely notice to all student, staff, and parents about results and actions taken.
- ♦ US Environmental Protection Agency info: <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water-toolkit>

Resources for you!



Assistance Program for Lead in School Drinking Water

FREE SAMPLING

- * Program provides free testing to assess lead in drinking water at eligible public schools and public and private child care facilities.
- * Collaborative program between MassDEP, University of Massachusetts, MA Dept of Public Health, and Massachusetts Water Resource Authority.

For more information:

www.mass.gov/assistance-program-for-lead-in-school-drinking-water

Email: lccadep@umass.edu
Call: 413-545-0840

Lead Contamination Control Act (LCCA) Program

- * Program provides educational information and assistance to schools and child care facilities.
- * Collaborative program between MassDEP and MA Dept of Public Health.

For more information:

www.mass.gov/service-details/the-lead-contamination-control-act-lcca

Email: program.director-dwp@mass.gov

School Water Improvement Grant (SWIG) Program

FREE WATER BOTTLE FILLING STATIONS

- * Program provides grants for purchase and installation of water bottle filling stations to replace water fountains where testing has found lead.
- * Collaborative program between the MA Clean Water Trust and MassDEP.

For more information:

www.mass.gov/school-water-improvement-grants

Email: SWIG@tre.state.ma.us