

Communication Plan Resource



Thank you for participating in the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Lead Testing in Schools and Child Care Facilities (LWSC) program. As outlined by the EPA, all participants of Oklahoma DEQ's LWSC Program must agree to publicly post sampling results for the public to access. Communicating early and often about your testing plans is a valuable step in building public trust around a delicate subject- potential lead contamination.

When Developing your Communication Plan:

- Make sure your information is honest, accurate and comprehensive
- Speak with one consistent voice
- Anticipate questions and concerns and address them proactively
- Keep your audiences up to date as new information becomes available
- Be positive and forthcoming- remember that lead contamination can be a scary thing to consider, make sure parents and staff understand your commitment to maintain a safe learning environment.



Step 1: Assemble your team

Organize a team of internal staff who will serve as the facility's Lead Testing ambassadors. This team should include those directly involved with sampling events and remediation work, facility leadership, and communication coordinators. Determine the individuals best suited to implement this program in your unique facility.



Step 2: Identify target audience

Identify the primary audiences or interested parties involved in the facility or surrounding community. This may include facility staff, students, and parents. Be aware of any organizations that you may need to communicate with- such as your local PTA or school board.

Step 3: Decide on method(s) of communication

What method or combination of methods would be most appropriate for your target audience? Example methods include: updating your school or district website, sending out emails to parents and staff, handing out letters or fliers, including information in a newsletter, or posting signage on public bulletin boards. Be sure to include information in other languages or provide a contact for non-English speakers to get more information.



Step 4: Make a plan of action!

Timely dissemination of communication materials is of the utmost importance. Public communication efforts are less complicated and generate less conflict if those affected are notified in advance of important issues and events. It is recommended that schools communicate with their audience before sampling begins, after testing results are received, if/when corrective measures are decided upon, and the results of post-remediation sampling (if applicable).

Communication Plan Resource



OKLAHOMA DRINKING WATER
LEAD TESTING
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS & CHILD CARE FACILITIES



Step 1: Assemble your Team

Teamwork makes the dream work! Organizing an internal team will allow for on-site visits to be organized swiftly, results to be communicated accurately, and remediation decisions to be made confidently.

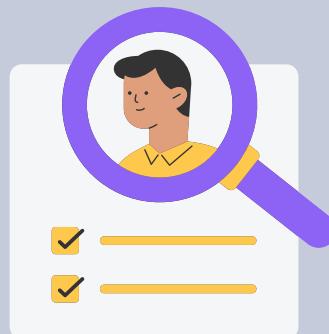
Below is a list of expected roles that will need to be assigned to members of your team. Note that some individuals may have more than one role.

Role Description	Lead	Back-Up
Internal Program Coordinator - the main point of contact between DEQ and facility, will schedule and organize site-visits, communicate remediation plans, and coordinate facility efforts		
Sampling Staff - Individuals who will be present during sampling events and other on-site visits, personnel should have basic knowledge of site plumbing and facility drinking water outlets		
Communications Coordinator - will coordinate communication efforts to ensure results are made accessible and any questions and concerns from parents and staff are addressed		
Decision makers - will make the final decisions regarding funding and drinking outlet remediation, oftentimes superintendent(s), principals, site directors, or district authorities		
Remediation team - staff responsible for implementing remediation decisions, such as: fixture removal, adding filters, flushing lines or replacing plumbing		
Other		

Communication Plan Resource



OKLAHOMA DRINKING WATER
LEAD TESTING
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS & CHILD CARE FACILITIES



Step 2: Identify target audience

Communicating early and often about your testing plans is a valuable step in building public trust around a delicate subject- potential lead contamination.

Identify the primary audiences or interested parties that you may need to communicate sampling plans, results, and remediation plans with.

Potential Target Audiences	Notes
Facility Staff - those that work within a facility, including teachers, administrators, and maintenance staff	
Community - Students, children, and parents of children involved in the school or childcare facility	
Building Community - people other than those included above that may use the building for other functions (i.e. local community groups, school board members, etc.)	
Larger Community - may consist of local residents and businesses in the facility's district or town. It is important that you be prepared to generate accurate news releases or respond to interview requests.	
Public Water Utility - future regulations will require water systems to sample water outlets in schools for lead contamination- it may be beneficial to involve your local water utility in sampling efforts- or provide sample results after you receive them	
Other - examples might include local PTA, school board, non-profits, county health departments, etc.	

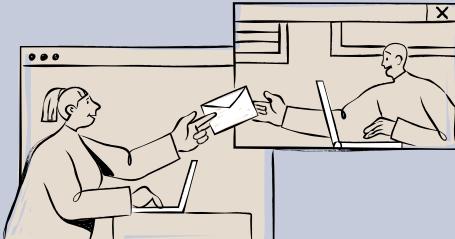
*It is a requirement to publicly post sample results for those directly impacted (i.e. staff and students) to access. This requirement can be met in a variety of different ways- depending on your facility. Determine the best course of action for your unique situation.

Communication Plan Resource



OKLAHOMA DRINKING WATER
LEAD TESTING
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS & CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Step 3: Decide on method(s) of communication



What method or combination of methods would be most appropriate for your target audience?

It is a requirement to make the results of this water sampling available to the public. Include information in other languages or provide a contact for non-English speakers when applicable.

Method(s) of communication

Notes

Posting signage- posting information about sample dates and water sampling results on public bulletin boards is a great way to spread information to many different audiences

Updating website or social media- information can be updated as it becomes available, this is an easy way to provide links to relevant resources

Emails or Newsletters- electronic communications are convenient for many parents, and including information in routine newsletters is an easy way to keep relevant parties informed

Handing out letters or flyers- similar to electronic newsletters- distributing flyers or letters might be better for communities with more limited internet accessibility

Presentations- Providing presentations at facility-related meetings can also serve as an effective means of communication. Relevant events include meetings of PTAs, faculty, and the school board

Press Release- A press release in the local newspaper or on local TV and radio stations can potentially reach a broad range of people.



Step 4: Make a Plan of Action!

Public communication efforts are less complicated and generate less conflict if those affected are notified in advance of important issues and events.

Below is a list of times it would be beneficial to communicate with your community. List target audiences and methods of communication you might use for each item.

Recommended times for communication	Target Audience(s)	Method(s) of Communication
Before sampling begins - plan to communicate your plans to sample for lead prior to sampling date, provide dates and access to relevant resources		
After sample results are received- communicate sampling results and provide interpretation resources- in instances of lead levels over the 10ppb action limit- be prepared to answer questions about potential corrective actions		
If/when corrective measures are decided upon - if remediation actions are necessary, post what specific actions will be taken and when (examples include: faucet in classroom A will be replaced within this next quarter)		
The results of any subsequent samplings - if corrective actions are taken to remediate lead levels, we suggest subsequent samplings to ensure the issue has been fixed. Communicate these sample results similarly to the initial sampling.		