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News Release

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DEQ Releases Information about Lead in Drinking Water

Lead enters drinking water primarily from household plumbing. Corrosive water dissolves lead from pipes, solder, metal faucets, and fixtures. Laws have restricted the amount of lead allowed in new pipes, fixtures, and solder. Homes built prior to 1986 are more likely to have more lead in their plumbing.

Are There Regulations for Lead in Drinking Water?

Under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and its amendments, public water supplies are required to test for many contaminants, including lead. These results are sent to all customers in an annual report and each household selected to take lead samples, along with the DEQ will receive test results soon after the analysis is completed

The federal Lead and Copper Rule requires that public water supplies monitor tap water lead concentrations at homes that are more likely to have plumbing materials that contain lead. If more than 10-percent of samples taken within the public water supply system exceed 15 parts per billion of lead, the water supplier has to provide public education and conduct a special study to determine if the water is corrosive. If the water is corrosive the supplier is required to provide corrosion control treatment to reduce lead from contaminating the drinking water. When corrosion control is not effective, removal of lead materials may be necessary.

What Can You Do?

First, learn more about your drinking water. All community water systems are required to prepare and deliver an annual water quality report called a Consumer Confidence Report for customers by July 1 of each year. Contact your water utility if you would like to receive a copy of the latest report or visit <http://sdwis.deq.state.ok.us/DWW/>. Click the Review Consumer Confidence Data button, select the water system name, select the year, and click the Generate Report button.

Secondly, you can have your water tested for lead. Homes may have internal plumbing materials that contain lead. A list of certified drinking water laboratories is available at <https://labaccreditation.deq.ok.gov/labaccreditation/>. Testing generally costs between \$25 and \$35.

Third, you can take measures to reduce lead in your drinking water at home. Flush your pipes prior to drinking the water. The more time water has been sitting in your home's pipes, the more lead it may contain. Anytime water in a particular faucet hasn't been used for six hours or longer, run the water until it becomes as cold as it will get.

Additionally, only use cold water for eating or drinking. Hot water is likely to contain higher levels of lead. Note that boiling will not get rid of lead.

How Can I Learn More?

To learn more about lead in drinking water, visit <http://www.deq.state.ok.us/index.htm>.

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