

Bordentown Water Department – Lead Action Level Exceedance

The Bordentown Water Department is required to perform periodic testing (i.e. every six months) of the water supply for levels of lead and copper at designated homes in Bordentown's distribution system. The January to June 2019 sampling round found 10 of 60 homes had results above the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) action level.

The action level for lead is 15 parts per billion (ppb) at the 90th percentile of samples. This is equivalent to one drop in ten completely full bathtubs. Bordentown's 90th percentile was 50 ppb.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead can cause serious health problems if too much enters your body from drinking water or other sources. It can cause damage to the brain and kidneys and can interfere with the production of red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of your body. The greatest risk of lead exposure is to infants, young children, and pregnant women. Scientists have linked the effects of lead on the brain with lowered IQ in children. Adults with kidney problems and high blood pressure can be affected by low levels of lead more than healthy adults. Lead is stored in the bones, and it can be released later in life. During pregnancy, the child receives lead from the mother's bones, which may affect brain development.

In other words, it is the fetus that is at risk because developing fetuses receive lead from the mother's bones. Children and fetuses absorb more lead into their bodies than adults and are more susceptible to its effects on brain development; however, most children with elevated blood lead levels do not exhibit any symptoms, but effects may appear later in life.

Is Bordentown delivering contaminated water to its customers?

Lead was not detected in a sample of the source water collected on June 12, 2019. Lead is unusual among drinking water contaminants in that it seldom occurs naturally in water supplies like rivers and lakes. Lead enters drinking water primarily as a result of the corrosion, or wearing away, of materials containing lead in the water distribution system and household plumbing. These materials include lead-based solder used to join copper pipes, brass and chrome-brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of or lined with lead.

Testing procedures are designed to target the most vulnerable homes/buildings for lead contamination in drinking water. Homes and buildings in New Jersey built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes and/or lead solder. These are the customers that are prioritized in our sampling.

Brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may also contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, that contain a maximum of 0.25 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free". However, prior to January 4, 2014, "lead free" allowed up to 8 percent lead content of the wetted surfaces of plumbing products including those labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified. Consumers should be aware of their current fixtures and take appropriate precautions.

Let the water run from the tap before using it for drinking or cooking any time the water in the faucet has gone unused for more than six hours. The longer the water resides in plumbing the more lead it contains. Flushing the tap means running the cold water faucet for about 15 to 30 seconds. Although toilet flushing or showering flushes water through a portion of the plumbing system, you still need to flush the water in each faucet before using it for drinking or cooking. Flushing tap water is a simple and inexpensive measure you can take to protect your health. It usually uses less than one gallon of water. **For those with lead service lines or until you determine if you are served by one, let the water run from the tap longer based on the length of the lead service line and the plumbing configuration in your home. In other words, the larger the home or building and the greater the distance to the water main (in the street), the more water it will take to flush properly.**

The Bordentown Water Department offers free water testing to City and Township water customers. If you would like to have your water tested, please call the Bordentown Water Department at 609-298-2121 ext. 5 to schedule an appointment. The testing is simple to do and all materials are included with instructions. We deliver the testing bottle with instructions and return to collect the water sample; allow approximately two to three weeks for results. If the results show lead concentration above the lead action level (15ppb or 0.015 mg/L), you can request a follow up flushed sample at no additional cost by contacting the number listed above. Any customers who wish to have the testing done on their own are welcome to use a certified lab from the list that can be found on the NJDEP website at <https://www13.state.nj.us/DataMiner>.

What is Bordentown doing to protect our customers?

A revised Lead & Copper sampling plan was submitted to NJDEP last year, including a re-evaluation of the sample pool to capture all high-risk customers. Sampling frequency has been increased to 60 samples every 6 months and will remain at this frequency until Bordentown is granted a monitoring reduction by NJDEP.

Bordentown Water Department was required to submit a corrosion control treatment recommendation (CCTR) to the NJDEP to identify treatment to better protect our customers. Bordentown received a CCTR approval on July 25, 2018 from the NJDEP and a temporary treatment approval to install Klenphos 400 (zinc pyrophosphate sequestering agent) plus orthophosphate on July 31, 2018. This approved treatment process was fully implemented in November 2018. An extension for the temporary treatment approval was approved June 27, 2019; levels are being monitored for effectiveness. Additionally, on July 1, 2019 the NJDEP required the implementation of a corrosion control treatment study by August 15, 2019. The study will assist in the evaluation of the existing corrosion control treatment, potential causes of elevated lead, and the identification of corrosion control alternatives.

A public meeting was held on July 24, 2019. Follow up meetings will be scheduled to discuss the lead action level exceedance and the steps moving forward. Further information can be found on the City of Bordentown website: www.cityofbordentown.com/lead-testing-information

The Water Department continues to excavate water services at and around the homes that are experiencing action level exceedances to confirm the type of materials used for the service lines from the water main to the curb and the curb to the home. At this time no lead service lines have been found at the excavation sites. Further excavations will be completed as the weather permits. Contact 609-298-2121 ext. 5 or John Walls at jwalls@cityofbordentown.com to learn more about replacing the lead service line on your property.

The EPA has published additional information to help consumers learn more about lead exposure. <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>

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