

CITY OF BORDENTOWN WATER UTILITY

LEAD LEVEL TESTING EXCEEDANCE AND WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Lead testing is performed in accordance with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection schedule which varies in length. The City of Bordentown Water Utility Plant was on a reduced schedule of lead level monitoring every three years. Due to this latest lead sampling resulting in what the NJ Department of Environmental Protection classifies as “an action level of lead testing exceedance” the City must now sample the water every six months until it has no levels of exceedance for two consecutive testing periods.

The testing is more commonly known as “first draw sampling” which simply put is that there is no water flowing through the household plumbing for more than six hours and the “first draw” of water is done by filling a plastic bottle provided by the Water Utility to the homeowner. The most common source of lead contamination is in household plumbing and lead builds up as the water sits stationary thus the “first draw” is meant to provide a worst case scenario for risk assessment. The goal of the City is to ensure the safest possible water by reducing the risk in the “worst case scenarios”.

Lead build-up is a result of water sitting in contact with a lead source (most commonly lead solder on copper pipes) and it is the responsibility of the Water Utility to ensure that the water is resistant to lead accumulation and proactive measures are being taken to properly treat the water.

Following the “first draw” sampling which produced levels of lead exceedance in some homes in our service area, a second testing was administered called a “flush draw”. A flush sample is taken where the water is used normally by the resident and “flushed” for 20-30 seconds prior to filling a test bottle. This type of testing is done to provide the resident with a “normal use risk profile” and to identify actions the homeowner can take to further reduce their exposure risk.

The flush samples were all well below the action level and any resident that is concerned with lead exposure is encouraged to run the water for 20-30 seconds prior to consumption when the water has been “standing” for several hours.

It is a concern for any provider of water to a service area any time there is a lead level exceedance and the City of Bordentown takes this very seriously. It is the goal of the Water Utility to provide clean, safe water to all of our customers. The testing results were able to confirm that any lead contamination is occurring outside of the distribution system. The sampling pool for lead and copper testing contains only the population with the highest risk; a full 45% of our highest risk customers had no detectable levels of lead. This is still not acceptable to the Water Utility when a handful of our residents are experiencing elevated levels and we are committed to ensuring that all of our residents have the safest water possible.

There are several actions being taken at this time; including communicating with each resident with an exceedance test result, provision of guidance in actions the homeowner can take and public education. The Water Utility is also making a full evaluation of how the water is treated at the plant. There are several improvements currently being implemented to eliminate future exceedances and we are evaluating additional treatment processes should they be necessary.