

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR DRINKING WATER

Replacement Requirements Not Met for the Bloomfield Water Department Lead Service Line Replacement Public Notice – December 2023

The Bloomfield Water Department violated a drinking water requirement. Our water system did not replace the minimum required, seven percent (7%) of lead service lines within one year of commencing replacement, thereby violating a drinking water requirement. This violation occurred in 2022. This notice is being sent to you now as a result of current and past discussions with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). **This is not a new violation but a continuation and update of a previous notice.** We completed the previous 7% of required lead service line replacements in 2023. This is an additional 7% of lead service lines that are required to be replaced, for a total of 14 percent (14%).

Even though this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct the situation.

What does this mean?

We routinely monitor for lead and copper at consumers' taps within our distribution system. However, we failed to collect drinking water samples from the proper and most vulnerable sampling locations during the first half of 2020 (January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020); and therefore, we could not determine if there were elevated levels of lead in the drinking water. We previously informed you of this exceedance in a notice issued on August 30, 2019. You can also view lead and copper results on the State's Drinking Water Watch website available at https://www9.state.nj.us/DEP_WaterWatch_public/index.jsp and entering our system name or PWSID number which you may find at the end of this notice. Our water system routinely monitors for lead and copper in the distribution system. The most recent sampling event conducted from January 2023 to December 2023, showed that lead levels were in compliance with the lead action level per the federal regulations. In the case of a lead action level exceedance, all customers will be notified accordingly. However, since replacing lead service lines is used to protect residents from lead and copper potentially leaching from internal pipes and solder, we are compelled to remind you of the health effects of lead and copper and steps you may take to reduce your exposure. The current 90th percentile (January to December 2023) is 6.3 parts per billion which is below the lead action level of 15 parts per billion.

As a result of this we were required to replace an additional seven percent (7%) of the lead service lines in the distribution system for a total of 14% from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. We began the Lead Service Line Replacement Program; however, we did not complete replacement of the required 7% by the deadline of December 31, 2021. In March 2023, the Bloomfield Water Department entered into an Administrative Consent Order with the DEP requiring replacement of the additional 7% of lead service lines by March 2025. To date, the Bloomfield Water Department has replaced 340 lead service lines of the 583 lead service lines that are required to be replaced. There are 243 lead service lines remaining to be replaced under this requirement.

The following is noted regarding this:

1. The requirement to replace 583 lead service lines is based on a requirement that any lead service line that is unknown at that time, shall be assumed to be lead or galvanized steel. This is based upon the fact that our inventory indicates we have 8119 unknown service lines that are assumed to be lead or galvanized. Our lead service line inventory indicates that Bloomfield has 8,119 unknown service lines and 203 known lead or galvanized service lines. Considering that all unknown service lines are lead or galvanized is an assumption of the actual amount of lead service lines within the Bloomfield Water System.
2. Understanding the nature of the situation, the Bloomfield Water Department immediately began replacing actual, known, lead service lines. We also began applying for New Jersey Infrastructure Bank funding which we obtained. However, obtaining this funding requires an application process that can take several months for approval before such a program can be designed and publicly bid for construction. The Bloomfield Water Department is currently awaiting approval of a New Jersey Infrastructure Bank Loan which we anticipate receiving in early 2024 at which time we will continue replacement of lead and galvanized service lines which should bring us into compliance with this requirement.
3. Updates related to this requirement will be provided on the township's website every three months. The updates can be found at:

<https://www.bloomfieldwpnj.com/454/Water-Advisories-Information>.

If you wish to continue to receive these updates via US Mail, please call 973-680-4009 so we can include you on a mailing list.

**Infants and children who drink water containing lead in excess of the action level could experience delays in their physical or mental development. Children could show slight deficits in attention span and learning abilities. Adults who drink this water over many years could develop kidney problems or high blood pressure.* Please see paragraph 9 below for further information*

What is being done?

This is not an emergency, if it had been you would have been contacted immediately.

Since **July 2019**, the Bloomfield Water Department has been aggressively investigating the actual locations of lead service lines as well as replacing them with copper when found.

To date, Bloomfield has inventoried over 3,000 service lines and removed and replaced 1,024 lines that were lead or galvanized steel.

The current lead service line inventory is posted on our website at:

<https://www.bloomfieldwpnj.com/DocumentCenter/View/12464/Lead-Service-line-Inventory-Summary-Revised-81623-PDF>

All addresses within the township as well as the status of the service line material are provided in the inventory.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Bloomfield Water Department has been *in compliance* with the federal lead and copper action levels since July 2020. This particular violation is related to replacing lead service lines and not related to an exceedance of lead content.

What should I do?

We encourage you to take steps to reduce your exposure to lead in drinking water through the following steps:

1. Determine if you have lead service line or interior lead plumbing or solder.

If your service line has been determined to be "unknown" at this time, property owners are encouraged to check their portion of the service lines for lead, and we are asking you to contact us at 973-680-4009 or via e-mail at engineering@bloomfieldwpnj.com if a lead service line is identified so we can update our records. If you recently has a meter replaced, the Township will document the type of material your service line is made of coming into your building. If your home/building was constructed prior to 1987, it is also important to determine if interior lead solder or lead pipes are present. You can check yourself, hire a licensed plumber, or check with your landlord.

2. Replace plumbing fixtures and service lines containing lead. If there is a lead service line, replace it in full, from main to home. Contact the Bloomfield Engineering Department at 973-680-4009 to learn more about replacing the lead service line on your property.

Replace brass faucets, fittings, and valves that do not meet the current definition of “lead free.” The current definition went into effect January 4, 2014; therefore, any “lead free” plumbing materials purchased and/or installed prior to that date should be discarded or replaced. Visit the NSF website at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

3. Run the cold water to flush out lead. 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 (Depending on the unique characteristics of your home you may need to flush for several minutes).**

4. Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula. Because lead from lead-containing plumbing materials and pipes can dissolve into hot water more easily than cold water, never drink, cook, or prepare beverages including baby formula using hot water from the tap. If you have not had your water sampled or if you know or suspect you have a lead service line it is recommended that bottled or filtered water be used for drinking and preparing baby formula. If you need hot water, draw water from the cold tap and then heat it.

5. Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.

6. Use alternative sources or treatment of water. If there is confirmed or suspected lead-containing materials, such as lead service lines and/or interior lead plumbing or lead solder, in your home or building, you may consider purchasing bottled water or a water filter. Be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 1-800-NSF-8010 or www.nsf.org for information on performance standards for water filters. Be sure to maintain and replace a filter device in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations.

Water softeners and reverse osmosis units will remove lead from water but can also make the water more corrosive to lead solder and plumbing by removing certain minerals; therefore, the installation of these treatment units at the point of entry into homes with lead plumbing should only be done under supervision of a qualified water treatment professional.

7. Remove and clean aerators/screens on plumbing fixtures. Over time, particles and sediment can collect in the aerator screen. Regularly remove and clean aerators screens located at the tip of faucets and remove any particles.

8. Test your water for lead. Call the Bloomfield Health Department at 973-680-4024 to find out how to get your water tested for lead. Testing is essential because you cannot see, taste, or smell lead in drinking water.

9. Get your child tested. Contact your local health department or healthcare provider to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about lead exposure. Your family doctor or pediatrician can perform a blood test for lead and provide you with information about the health effects of lead. New Jersey law requires that children be screened at both 1 and 2 years of age. Children 3 to 5 years of age should also be screened if they have not been screened before. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure: Wash your children’s hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

For more information, please contact the Bloomfield Water Department at 973-680-4009; via e-mail at engineering@bloomfieldtnj.com or via US mail at Bloomfield Engineering Department, Room 203, 1 Municipal Plaza, Bloomfield, NJ 07003.

*Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail. *

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