

## **HAVE YOU HAD YOUR WATER METER REPLACED???**

**THE BLOOMFIELD WATER DEPARTMENT HAS IMPLEMENTED A TOWNSHIP-WIDE PROGRAM TO REPLACE ALL CUSTOMER WATER METERS WITH NEW ONES. THIS PROVIDES AN ADVANTAGE TO RESIDENTS THAT IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING ACCURATE READINGS OF THE AMOUNT OF WATER YOU USE, THE INSTALLER WILL INSPECT THE PIPING COMING INTO YOUR HOUSE AND DETERMINE, CONCLUSIVELY, IF IT IS MADE OF LEAD. THIS INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE BLOOMFIELD WATER DEPARTMENT, AND TO YOU. FURTHERMORE, THE TOWNSHIP WILL REPLACE THIS PORTION OF THE LINE, IF IT IS LEAD, AT NO COST TO YOU WITH COPPER AS PART OF OUR LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM. THEREFORE, THIS INFORMATION IS VALUABLE TO YOU. You should be receiving a mailing from our contractor National Metering Services, Inc., which will provide you with the appropriate phone number and PIN to schedule an appointment. Please note that we are currently transitioning to a new billing system using the new meters. Customers who have not had their meters replaced will be receiving estimated bills until such time that the new meter is installed**

The installation of the new water meter takes about thirty minutes and *\* requires access to your basement or utility room.*

National Metering Services will be using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and following detailed safety procedures in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

**\*\*\*PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER\*\*\***

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

February 2021

Contact us at 973-680-4009 to obtain a translated copy of the public education materials or to request assistance in the appropriate language.

## “INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE SOBRE EL PLOMO EN EL AGUA POTABLE

Enero de 2021

Comuníquese con nosotros al 973-680-4009 para obtener una copia traducida de los materiales de educación pública o para solicitar asistencia en el idioma apropiado.

The Bloomfield Water Department has been continually sampling for lead in its drinking water. Our system recently failed to collect drinking water samples from the proper and most vulnerable sampling locations; and therefore, we could not determine if there are elevated levels of lead in the drinking water. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Please read this information closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

This notice is being distributed to you and all customers of the Bloomfield Water Department as a regulatory requirement. Under the Code of Federal Regulations for the Control of Lead and Copper, 40 CFR Part 141 Subpart I, Bloomfield Water Department is required to routinely sample for lead and copper at a minimum number of locations based on the population served.

The 90th percentile value for our water system for 2 previous monitoring periods are provided in the table below. The action level for lead is 15 parts per billion. The action level is the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow. The Bloomfield Water Department did not exceed this level in the 3 previous monitoring periods; however, Bloomfield Water Department did not collect the proper number of lead and copper samples (60) from sites that meet the requirements of the Lead and Copper Rule (i.e., sampling sites with the greatest risk of lead exposure from drinking water) and an accurate 90th percentile value could not be calculated for the July 1 to December 31, 2019 and January 1 to June 30, 2020 monitoring periods. The Bloomfield Water Department did not exceed the action level for the July 1 to December 31, 2020 monitoring period (8.8 parts per billion out of 67 acceptable samples).

Monitoring Period	Result in parts per billion	Acceptable Number of Collected Samples
January 1 to June 30, 2020	5.9	36
July 1 to December 31, 2019	6	40

Results can be found on our website and on NJDEP Drinking Water Watch ([www9.state.nj.us/DEP\\_WaterWatch\\_public/index.jsp](http://www9.state.nj.us/DEP_WaterWatch_public/index.jsp)) by simply typing Bloomfield Water Department in the search window (“Water System Name”). This link is also available on the Bloomfield Township website at [www.bloomfieldtwpnj.com/454/Water-Advisories-Information](http://www.bloomfieldtwpnj.com/454/Water-Advisories-Information).

### **What Does This Mean?**

Under the authority of the Safe Drinking Water Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set the action level for lead in drinking water at 15 parts per billion. This means utilities must ensure that water from the taps used for human consumption do not exceed this level in at least 90 percent of the sites sampled (90th percentile result). Our water system’s most recent 90th percentile result at 8.8 parts per billion does not exceed the action level. The action level is *the concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow*. If water from the tap does exceed this limit, then the utility must take certain steps to correct the problem. Because lead may pose serious health risks, the EPA set a Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) of zero for lead. The MCLG is *the level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety*.

### **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.

### **Sources of Lead**

Lead is a common metal found in the environment. Drinking water is one possible source of lead exposure. The main sources of lead exposure are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust or soil. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, cosmetics, imported spices and other food. Other sources include exposure in the workplace and exposure from certain hobbies like shooting ranges and fishing (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes). Lead is found in some toys, some playground equipment, and some children's metal jewelry. *Tip: Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.*

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 pipe, brass and chrome-brass faucets, and in some cases, pipes made of or lined with lead.

When water remains in contact with lead pipes or plumbing materials containing lead over time, the lead may dissolve into your drinking water. **This means the first water drawn from the tap in the morning, or later in the afternoon if the water has not been used all day, may contain elevated levels of lead.**

- Homes and buildings in New Jersey built before 1988 are more likely to have lead pipes and/or lead solder.
- Service lines, which may also contain lead, are the individual pipes that run from the water main in the street to a home or building and consist of two portions. The first portion is the section of the service line from the water main to the curb stop and the second portion is the section from the curb stop to the home. Ownership of the service line varies by water system, but for Bloomfield Water Department the service line is owned partially by the water system and property owner.

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.

EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of a person's potential exposure to lead may come from drinking water. Infants who consume mostly formula mixed with lead-containing water may receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water. When there are elevated levels of lead in your water, drinking water is likely to be a more important source of exposure.

### **Steps you can take to reduce exposure to lead in drinking water**

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

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 if a lead service line is identified so, we can update our records. If your home/building was constructed prior to 1988, 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. The Township has implemented a program to examine customer service lines for the presence of lead. If such lines are uncovered, they will be removed by the Bloomfield Water Department at no cost to the property owner when a construction contract is awarded later this year.

**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 973-680-4009 or e-mail at [engineering@bloomfieldtwpnj.com](mailto:engineering@bloomfieldtwpnj.com) to learn more about replacing the lead service line on your property. The Bloomfield Water Department will replace lead service lines at no cost to the resident if they are discovered during routine construction or whenever a lead sample is returned with a level above 15 parts per billion. If the service line from the house to the curb (i.e., owned by property owner) is discovered to be lead, the township will also replace it at no cost to the resident.

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](http://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 15-30 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.**

**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](http://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 us at 973-680-4009 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. The Bloomfield Health Department will sample your water at no cost if you suspect lead in your water and provide you with a free water filter.

**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. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing 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.

### **What Is Being Done?**

The Bloomfield Water Department has continually been evaluating the quality of the water as it enters the distribution system upon receipt from Newark Water Department as well as representative areas throughout the distribution system and take additional actions, as deemed necessary, to reduce lead levels. The Bloomfield Water Department presently purchases fully treated water from the City of Newark's Pequannock Water Treatment Facility and does not treat the water. The City of Newark has implemented new treatment to their water since April of 2019. This new treatment has been effective in reducing overall lead levels throughout Bloomfield including those that presently have lead service lines. Those homes which have lead-containing materials meeting the current lead-free definition should not experience elevated levels of lead if steps above are followed.

The Bloomfield Water Department has implemented a proactive plan to replace all known lead service lines, when discovered, from the street to the home/building. This will reduce the potential for lead to enter into your water supply. Starting in 2018, the Township has replaced over one-hundred-thirty (130) service lines. The township has expanded the program through a combination of exploratory work and removal utilizing private utility contractors in addition to using our Public Works Water Department and will continue this program throughout 2021 and beyond. Our current findings indicate that the vast majority of lead piping is located on the street side of the house connection (i.e., owned by the Township). If lead is found on the house side of the connection (i.e., owned by property owner), the township will also replace the line at no cost to the resident. The Township has executed a contract with John Garcia Construction Co. to investigate over 500 locations throughout the township and replace over 20 of these locations with copper. We anticipate a second contract being implemented to replace 200 to 300 lead service lines in 2021 based upon the findings of the exploratory work.

Bloomfield Water Department is continuing both monitoring efforts and public education about lead in drinking water.

### **Additional Information**

For more information, call us at 973-680-4009 or via e-mail at [engineering@bloomfieldtwpnj.com](mailto:engineering@bloomfieldtwpnj.com). For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's website at, <http://www.epa.gov/lead> call the National Lead Information Center at 800-424-LEAD or Safe Drinking Water Act hotline at 1-800-426-4791, or contact your health care provider.

This notice is being sent to you by the Bloomfield Water Department, 1 Municipal Plaza, Bloomfield, NJ 07003; New Jersey Public Water Supply Identification Number (NJ PWSID): NJ0702001.

*\*Please share this information with all the other people who consume water provided by Bloomfield Water Department, 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. \**

*Posted on website: February 8, 2021*