

# LEAD IN DRINKING WATER INFORMATION GUIDE

## What You Need to Know about the Risks of Lead in Drinking Water.

### How does lead get into drinking water?

- Lead in drinking water rarely comes from the water treatment plants and water mains.
- Lead may come from lead service lines running between the water main in the street and the home, and from plumbing inside the home.
- If drinking water is corrosive, it can corrode customers' lead service lines and plumbing fixtures, which can result in elevated lead levels in drinking water.
- Homes constructed prior to 1950 may be served by a lead water service line. Copper pipe installed before 1985 may have been installed using lead-containing solder.
- To see if your property is in a Council Bluffs Water Works system neighborhood that has the greatest potential for a lead service line, view the [Potential Lead Service Lines in Council Bluffs map](#).

### What are the health effects of lead in drinking water?

- Customers who drink water with elevated lead levels can suffer long term health impacts including damage to the liver, kidneys, or even the brain.
- Mental development issues are a significant concern for children exposed to lead contamination.
- In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency published a regulation to control lead and copper in drinking water. The rule is part of the Safe Water Drinking Act, and it requires water systems to monitor drinking water at customer taps. If lead concentrations exceed the Action Level of 0.015 mg/L (or 15 parts per billion) in more than 10 percent of taps, the system must complete additional actions to control the corrosion.

### What is Council Bluffs Water Works doing to control elevated lead levels?

- Council Bluffs Water Works treats our drinking water to ensure it is not corrosive.
- Corrosion control is an important part of Council Bluffs Water Works' treatment process. We carefully manage the chemistry of our drinking water to ensure the water is not corrosive.
- A number of factors influence how corrosive treated drinking water is. These factors include the total amount of dissolved minerals in the water (calcium and magnesium), alkalinity, temperature, and pH.
- The Council Bluffs Water Works analyzes water samples every day to maintain optimum corrosion control treatment.

## Could what happened in Flint, Michigan happen in Council Bluffs?

- Council Bluffs Water Works is paying close attention to what unfolded in Flint, Michigan.
- We do not have first-hand knowledge about what occurred in Flint, but this much seems clear: When Flint switched its water supply source, the new water caused lead to leach from service lines and home plumbing – lead that ended up in water coming out of the taps.
- This kind of incident is unlikely here because Council Bluffs Water Works monitors water quality parameters on a daily or even hourly basis to ensure the drinking water we produce will not be corrosive. Council Bluffs Water Works also follows a written Lead and Copper Sampling Plan. This plan helps ensure we stay in compliance with the requirements of the Lead and Copper Rule.
- Council Bluffs Water Works tests for lead and copper contamination by asking customers with specific types of plumbing to collect samples in their homes.
- The samples are submitted to a Laboratory certified to analyze lead in drinking water.
- These results are published annually in Council Bluffs Water Works' [Consumer Confidence Report](#), which describes the regulatory requirements Council Bluffs Water Works must comply with.
- Council Bluffs Water Works continues to be in full compliance with Lead and Copper Rule requirements.
- The Council Bluffs Water Works is committed to providing our customers Safe Drinking Water.

## What can you do to reduce the chance of exposure lead in drinking water?

- Use only water from the cold tap for drinking, cooking, or preparing baby formula.
- Flush the tap for two to four minutes before using water for drinking or cooking when no water has been used for several hours. Showering, washing dishes, or doing laundry can be effective ways to flush household plumbing before water is used for drinking or cooking.
- While in-home water treatment devices such as softeners or filtration systems are not necessary in Council Bluffs, if such in-home treatment devices are used, they must be properly operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Improperly operated in-home treatment devices can increase the potential for water to become corrosive.

## Where can I find more information?

- To see if your property is in a Council Bluffs Water Works system neighborhood that has the greatest potential for a lead service line, view the [Potential Lead Service Lines in Council Bluffs map](#).
- If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Please contact Council Bluffs Water Works at (712) 328-1006.
- Visit EPA's lead information website: <http://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family#homeleadsafe>.