

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER

**System Name: The City of Idaho Springs
Has Elevated Levels of Lead**

Our system found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and children 6 years and younger. Please read this notice closely to see what you can do to reduce lead in your drinking water.

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.

Idaho Springs does not have lead in its raw or finished water or water mains in the street. When water is in contact with pipes or plumbing that contain lead for several hours, the lead may enter drinking water. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have plumbing containing lead. New homes may also have lead; even "lead-free" plumbing may contain some lead. 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 the lead-containing water can receive 40 to 60 percent of their exposure to lead from drinking water.

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, and some plumbing materials. In addition, lead can be found in certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, food and cosmetics. Other sources include exposure in the work place and exposure from certain hobbies (lead can be carried on clothing or shoes).

New brass faucets, fittings, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may contribute lead to drinking water. **The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8 percent lead to be labeled as "lead free".** However, plumbing fixtures labeled National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certified may only have up to 2 percent lead. **Consumers should be aware of this when choosing fixtures and take appropriate precautions.**

Don't forget about other sources of lead such as lead paint, lead dust, and lead in soil. Wash your children's hands and toys often as they can come into contact with dirt and dust containing lead.

Steps You Can take to Reduce Your Exposure to Lead in Your Water

1. **Run your water to flush out lead.** Run water for 15-30 seconds or until it becomes cold or reaches a steady temperature before using it for drinking or cooking, if it hasn't been used for several hours. This flushes lead-containing water from the pipes.
2. **Use cold water for cooking and preparing baby formula.** Do not cook with or drink water from the hot water tap; lead dissolves more easily into hot water. Do not use water from the hot water tap to make formula.
3. **Do not boil water to remove lead. Boiling water will not reduce lead.**
4. **Look for alternative sources or treatment of water (if lead is a concern in your home or business).** You may want to consider purchasing bottled water or water filter. Read the package to be sure the filter is approved to reduce lead or contact NSF International at 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 instructions to protect water quality.
5. **Test your water for lead.** Feel free to call your Idaho Springs Water Quality Department at (303) 567-4458 to find out how you can have your water tested for lead.
6. **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 exposure
7. **Identify if your plumbing fixtures contain lead.** New brass faucets, fitting, and valves, including those advertised as "lead-free", may contribute lead to drinking water. The law currently allows end-use brass fixtures, such as faucets, with up to 8% lead to be labeled as "lead-free". Visit the National Sanitation Foundation Web site at www.nsf.org to learn more about lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

What happened?

The city has been on reduced monitoring requirements for lead and copper since 2006, for not exceeding the action limits during prior years of sampling. Under the reduced lead and copper monitoring rule, we were required to sample a minimum of ten homes annually between June 1st and September 30th. In 2010 three of the twelve customer samples received, exceeded the action level for lead which is 0.015 mg/L or parts per million. These three homes were sampled again after receipt of original lab results, and all three came back under the action level for lead the second time. Under the lead and copper rule, all samples collected must be used to calculate the "90th percentile", and the city exceeded the action level for lead, as three of fifteen samples exceeded the action level.

Because the source of lead and copper is generally the customer-owned piping (brass and bronze faucets, copper pipe and lead solder) rather than any part of the water supplier's infrastructure, equipment, or even the original source of water, the lead and copper rule is quite unlike any of the other provisions of the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations. To some extent, the water supplier is made responsible for the quality of water sampled at pipes and locations outside of the water supplier's control. The water supplier can however, and is required to control the corrosivity of the finished water to minimize the leaching of lead and copper.

Because the source of lead and copper is the customer's plumbing, lead and copper sampling is required to be "first draw", where the water has remained in contact with the plumbing for six to twelve hours. All other water samples are collected by state licensed Idaho Springs water operators, however, sampling requirements for lead and copper make this impractical. Rather than having operators spend six hours in a customer's home, sample bottles and sampling instructions are left with the consumer.

What is being done to reduce lead levels?

EPA regulations require water systems to develop a targeted sampling pool, focused on those sites with the greatest risk of lead leaching. All compliance samples used to determine the 90th percentile must come from that sampling pool. Maintaining a consistent set of compliance sample sites provides the water system with a baseline against which to measure over time. The city also had engineers conduct water quality parameter studies and initiate optimum corrosion control treatment techniques for both the old and new water treatment plants in the past. The city is now working with the State Water Quality Control Division to evaluate current water quality parameters and recommended corrosion control treatment.

History of lead levels

For the previous five years (six sampling events) one of the fourteen sample sites exceeded the action level for lead five times, with a nearly non detectable limit once. Of the other thirteen sites only one other had exceeded the action limit, and did so slightly on two of six occasions. These consumers received lab results along with requests by the Idaho Springs water staff to investigate possible sources of lead in their homes. The city also excavated the water line belonging to the home that consistently indicated elevated levels of lead in hopes of replacing an old lead service connection, however, the connection and service line were lead free. Numerous requests by the city water department to further assist this customer have gone unanswered.

What is being done now?

Following the exceedence of the action level for lead in 2010, the city has completed one round of water quality parameter sampling events, and will complete a second round by February. With the results of these water parameter tests, the city will consult with the State Water Quality Control Division on corrosion control treatment options. The city is also required to extend the lead and copper targeted sampling pool to a minimum of twenty sites, and conduct the sampling twice per year until further notice.

For More Information

Call us at (303) 567-4458. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/lead or contact your health care provider.

**This notice is brought to you by the City of Idaho Springs Water Department
(303) 567-4458 – P.O. Box 907 Idaho Springs, CO 80452**

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