# General Public Education Notice

If you create your own notice, you must include the language shown in italics. You must cover the topics explained in non-italicized text, but you can change the language. Fill in the areas highlighted in gray, in brackets, prior to distribution.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD IN YOUR DRINKING WATER**

[Insert name of water system/community] found elevated levels of lead in drinking water in some homes/buildings. 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.

**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.

**Sources of Lead**

Lead is rarely found in natural sources of water such as rivers and lakes or underground aquifers. You may be in contact with lead through paint, water, dust, soil, food, hobbies, or your job. The most common way for Minnesotans to come in contact with lead is through lead-based paint found in homes built before 1978.

Homes built before 1940 may have lead service lines that connect them to public water. Plumbing systems built before 1986 may have lead parts. New “lead free” pipes and plumbing parts may still contain 0.25% lead. Brass parts may also contain some lead. Note that many faucets are made of brass even if they do not have a “brass” color. The amount of lead that gets into in drinking water depends on many factors, such as the amount of lead in plumbing materials, water chemistry, and water usage.

**How Can I Reduce My Exposure to Lead in Water?**

* **Let the water run** before using it for drinking or cooking. If you have a lead service line, let the water run for 3-5 minutes. If you do not have a lead service line, let the water run for 30-60 seconds. The more time water has been sitting in your home’s pipes, the more lead it may contain.
* **Use cold water** for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula. Hot water absorbs more lead from pipes than cold water.
* **Boiling water does not reduce lead levels** and may actually increase them.
* **Test your water**. The only way to know if lead has been reduced by letting it run is to check with a test. If letting the water run does not reduce lead, consider other options to reduce your exposure. Many laboratories can test your water to see if it contains lead.
  + [If your water system offers testing, include your contact information and anything else, such as if you provide free testing. You could also refer to other labs in your area that are certified to do water testing for lead.]
  + [Search for Accredited Laboratories (https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam)](https://eldo.web.health.state.mn.us/public/accreditedlabs/labsearch.seam)) to purchase a sample container and get instructions on how to submit a sample.
* **Treat your water** or find an alternative source if a test shows your water has high levels of lead after you let the water run: [Home Water Treatment Fact Sheet (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/factsheet/hometreatment.html)).
* **Get your child tested**. Contact your local health department or doctor to find out how you can get your child tested for lead if you are concerned about exposure. Find out more information about child lead poisoning prevention with [Childhood lead exposures (https:/data.web.health.state.mn.us/web/mndata/lead)](https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/web/mndata/lead).

**What Did We Find?**

[City or non-municipal water system name] analyzed tap water samples taken from a number of homes and buildings [in the city, development, apartment building, mobile home park, etc.]. Some of the samples were above the action level for lead.

What Are We Doing about the Issue?

[Insert a quote from a water system official letting the public know what actions the system is taking to address the lead action level exceedance or insert a list of action steps. This could include an explanation for why lead levels are elevated, if this is known. You may wish to include information about the exceedance and the history of lead levels in tap water samples in your community. For example, have they declined substantially over time? Have they been low and risen recently? Explain the steps being taken to reduce lead levels, such as corrosion control treatment and/or lead service line replacement.]

**For More Information**

Call us at [insert phone number for your water system] or visit our website at [insert website address]. For more information on reducing lead exposure around your home/building and the health effects of lead, visit [Lead (http://www.epa.gov/lead)](http://www.epa.gov/lead) or contact your doctor.

This notice is brought to you by [insert name of water system/community]. State Water System ID\_\_\_. Date distributed: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_