



COMMUNITY ADVISORY

UPDATE ON LEAD IN DRINKING WATER AT LAUSD SCHOOLS

Lead is a metal that has been used for many years in products such as gasoline, paint, and pottery glaze. Lead has also been used in solder to join metal pipes. When lead is present in pipes that deliver drinking water, very small amounts of the lead may be carried along with the water. This can be a cause for concern because lead, even in small amounts, may be harmful if swallowed.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires that lead in drinking water not exceed 15 parts per billion. This is about the same proportion as a quarter of a teaspoon of food coloring in a medium-sized swimming pool.

One way to reduce the amount of lead coming from a drinking fountain or faucet is to turn it on and let the water run for at least 30 seconds. After this is done in the morning, the water coming from the drinking fountain or faucet is usually safe for the rest of the day. Each LAUSD school is required to run all drinking fountains each day before students arrive.

LAUSD conducted recent testing to determine whether students at school were potentially exposed to high levels of lead in school drinking fountains. The testing was done at every school in the District. Here is what the School District found: About 1 in 7 water fountains or other fixtures (13.9%) exceeded the acceptable level of lead when they were first turned on in the morning. Once the water had been allowed to run for 30 seconds, 1 out of every 31 fixtures (3.2%) exceeded that level.

The District has turned off all of the drinking fountains that produced unacceptable levels of lead after water was run for 30 seconds. The next step will be to repair or replace all of these fixtures. Testing will continue even after the fixtures are repaired to make sure that the water stays safe for students and staff.

You can find more information, get answers to questions, or check the survey results for your child's school at our web site, http://www.lausd-oehs.org/Lead_DrinkingWater.asp. You can also call the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199 if you need additional information about lead in drinking water.